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THE SPIRITUALISTS' HALL.

LENDERMAN'S ADVENTURES

AMONG THE

SPIRITUALISTS AND FREE-LOVERS;

EXPLAINING HOW THE

"RAPPINGS," "TABLE-TIPPINGS," PLAYING ON INSTRUMENTS, ETC., ARE DONE,

AND WHERE THE

SPIRIT COMMUNICATIONS COME FROM:

CONTAINING A GREAT NUMBER OF

EXCITING INCIDENTS OF THE RUIN OF INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES; OF LUNACIES; SEDUCTIONS AND SUICIDES, CAUSED BY THESE INFERNAL SYSTEMS OF DECEPTION.

BY LENDERMAN.

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CINCINNATI:
H. M. RULISON, 141 MAIN ST.
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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Introduction. Reasons for writing this Book. A Trip down the Mississippi in January, 1856. A beautiful Female Corpse taken from the River at ———. The Locket and its Miniature. A Burning Steamer.

CHAPTER II.

Return to ———. Obtain the Ring taken from the finger of the beautiful Corpse. The Queen City in the middle of the "Cold Winter." A Spirituo-Freelove Meeting; Its Male and Female Attendants; Its Entertainments.

CHAPTER III.

A Scene at the National Theater. Recognition of a Mysterious Character. Plan for obtaining an Interview. A Spiritualist's Parlor.

CHAPTER IV.

A Spiritual Leader. Suspicions Confirmed. Matilda DeLong, the Spiritualist's Chambermaid. The Ring of the beautiful Corpse recognized. An Interesting Scene. A Visit to the People's Theater. An Affectionate Couple.

CHAPTER V.

A Revelation. History of the Spiritual Leader, Guysot, and of his Wife. Matilda's Story of Herself. The Society of Freelovers of New York; Its Wicked Doings. How Husbands were estranged from their Wives, and Wives seduced from their Husbands. Sad History of a beautiful and accomplished Lady, from a suburban Village, who fell a Victim to this infernal Clique. Story of Edward Lawrence and his young Wife. A double Suicide. A Victim of Despair. Escape of a Libertine. Causes of Self-destruction.

CHAPTER VI.

Singular and Romantic History of Emily Lee, the beautiful Corpse, and of her Parents and Uncle. How she became the Spiritualist's Wife. Meeting of the Spiritualist's two Wives. Continuation of Matilda's Narrative. Her Meeting with Guysot's first Wife; Her Repentance. A Spiritual Bed-chamber. Affecting Scene. Plan for breaking up the Orgies of the Spiritual Freelovers.

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CHAPTER VII.

A Spiritual Circle. A "Speaking Medium." Description and History of the Members of the "Circle." The Rev. Mr. Faleau. Mrs. M———, the Medium. The Widow Peabody. Landor. Miss B———. The Pork Merchant's Wife. Mrs. N———, etc. How Landor induced Miss B——— (a beautiful young lady) to attend these Meetings. Spiritual Wine. A Spiritual Dance. Rescue from Infamy. The Dance Suddenly Stopped. Dancers in Trouble. A Spiritual Leader Exposed. Matilda and Guysot. Terrible Scene. Death of the Leader. The Widow's Grief.

CHAPTER VIII.

House of Mourning. Mrs. Guysot. Henriette. Inside History of a Boarding School for Young Ladies. Mrs. Jelliot, the Matron. A Remarkable Sunday Morning Breakfast. A Solitary Burial. Another Victim of Spiritualism. A Harrowing Scene. The Monster Freelove. Arrival of Mrs. Guysot's Parents; Their Deep Affliction. Melancholy Journey.

CHAPTER IX.

Gratitude of an Affectionate Heart. A Lovely Creature. Beauty in the Country and Beauty in the City. A Perfect Woman. How and where to find a handsome and sensible Woman. Cause of Homely Women. A Good-for-nothing Woman. Base Conduct of a Spiritualist. Infamous "Communications" of a "Medium." An Affecting Scene in the Cars.

CHAPTER X.

Matilda's Revelations of the Horrid Acts of the Spiritual Freelove Society. Mary Vernon, the beautiful Glovemaker; Her Sad History and Unhappy Death. A Family ruined by the Spiritual Demon. Pollock, the Spiritual Lecturer. Inhuman Wickedness of a Female Medium. The Lost One. Spiritualists Alarmed at their Wickedness. The Porter's and the Lady-boarder's Story. A Home Destroyed.

CHAPTER XI.

Honest Believers in Spiritualism. How Mediums are made. Where Spiritual Communications come from. The Credulity of Spiritualists. History of Mr. Levers and his Wife. Sincere Believers. How this Delusion changes the Character. The Bible Denounced.

CHAPTER XII.

Selections from a Package of "Confidential Letters" from an Itinerant Spiritual Lecturer and his Female Medium, to a Spiritual Leader in the City. How the People are Humbugged. An account of the Lecturer's Adventures in different Country Villages. "As-

tonishing the Natives." How the Spirits of Deceased Persons sometimes tell such straight Stories. Interesting Communication from the Dead Merchant. A Thief Discovered. How a Medium got "Trapped," and how she got out of it. Valuable Advice to Spiritual Leeturers. The Fellow who was bound to see a Table moved. What kind of Tables and Rooms Spirits like. Wear and Tear of Conscienec. Spiritual Fools. A handsome young Widow who wanted a Communication—and got one. The Spiritualist who was starving himself to Death. The Widow whose husband had visited her after death. Another Deranged Spiritualist. A rich story about a Widower who married his wife's sister through the influence of Spiritualism. How the Leeturer was paid. Advantage of carrying a Gold Watch. How Leeturing on Spiritualism develops the creative faeultics. How the Leeturer came near losing his Medium, Suse. Villainies of Spiritual Leeturers. Connection of Freelove with Spiritualism. A not very flattering description of a majority of Spiritualists. Their Motives. Continuation of Matilda's Manuscript.

CHAPTER XIII.

Matilda sees an Advertisement in reference to her parentage. The Lost Child. Mysteries of a City Postoffiec. Parents found. Going Home. A Trip to the North with Matilda and Henriette. An Intelligent Schoolmaster. An interesting society of Spiritualists in Northwestern Ohio. The Schoolmaster gives an account of their doings. The Shoemaker whose wife "rapped" herself to death. The rapping Bricklayer, and how he got his second wife by the aid of Spiritualism. A "Prescribing Medium." Spiritual Medicine. Remarkable Spiritual Practice. Diarrheas, toothaches and fresh cuts cured. A very ludicrous description of a Country Landlord, who dealt in Spiritual Elixirs. A laughable scene, in which the Landlord gets "overhauled." A Country "Dicker." A Child killed by Spiritual Medicine.

CHAPTER XIV.

Dark Suspicions. An important charge given to Davison, the Schoolmaster. Traveling in a new country. Life in the Backwoods. A First Settler. Arrive at "Home." Domestic Scene. Farewell. Davison gives a history of Himself. A Noble Man.

CHAPTER XV.

A meeting with familiar characters on the Cars. An important conversation overheard, and a dark conspiracy revealed. The Narrator's return to Cincinnati. Sister Moredock, the charming Medium. A Trump. A Philosophical Libertine. Marrying for Money. A Spendthrift getting economical. An unexpected meeting before Sister Moredock's. The Police attend a "Spiritual Circle." Interesting Developments. A description of the twenty members of a

"Circle." The antics of Mediums, such as Singing, Shouting, Jerking, etc. A deluded Old Lady. Philosophy of the Human Battery. A Button-rose of a Woman. Spiritual Singing. A Spiritual Usher or "Ring Master."

CHAPTER XVI.

The Outsiders of the Circle. A Young Widow. A well-matched Couple. A withered Lady puffed out and patched up. A "Poll-evil Man." Last Chance for Matrimony. An old Spiritual Stage-horse not fond of dry provender. A Latin Communication. A Smoky Medium. An Indian Communication. Tecumseh on the Stand; Tells who killed him; Down on Dick Johnson. Spiritual Force "*versus*" Gravitation. How the "Tapping" and "Knocking" is done. A very Interesting Room up stairs. Admitted behind the Scenes of a Spiritual Stage. How the Tables are moved.

CHAPTER XVII.

Mrs. Faleau (the Preacher's wife) meets her husband in Sister Moredock's parlor. A Fashionable Minister. Grand stampede among the Spiritualists. Mr. Faleau's Residence. Landor persuades the Preacher to elope with Miss Callan. Struggle between Sin and Conscience. Sin triumphs by the aid of Brandy. Landor has an interview with Miss Callan; His appeal to her. Wavering between Virtue and fear of Disgrace. A Convincing Argument. They all leave in the Cars for the North.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Waiting for a Letter. A Father's Gratitude. A Visit from Henriette's Father; His Disappointment. An important Telegraphic Dispatch. A Second Trip to the North. The Father's Agony. Arrival at our Destination. A Model Landlord. "Dark as Pitch." The Adventures of a Night. "Spiritual Hall." A Description of the Company below, and an Account of their Doings. Henriette Discovered; Her Perilous Situation. Miss Callan. Landor again.

CHAPTER XIX.

The Spirit of Dr. Rush. Prescribes for Matilda and the Schoolmaster. Singular Advice of the Spirit to Henriette. Spiritual Fanatics. Poor Henriette! An Importunate Female Member. Three very Interesting Spiritual Widows, Widow Blonde, Widow Openface, the Consolable Widow Barnthissel. A Sovereign Remedy for Widows' Heart Wounds. Some Widowers to Match. "Widowers' Evil;" Its only cure. Advice to Married Men who expect to marry again. Marrying for a Living. "Aunt Bettie's." How to tell an Old Maid. Extraordinary personal attraction of a Spinster. A Selfish, Sensual Man. The Lights Blown Out.

How Spirits blow Horns and play on Fiddles. How Spiritual Hands and Arms are felt. The Meeting breaks up. Landor, the Medium and Henriette go off together.

CHAPTER XX.

The Medium. Mrs. Madden's House. A Drunken Visitor. Horrid Plot of Poisoning revealed. Two Assistants admitted. The Preacher again. A terrible dilemma. Imploring Divine assistance. Landor confident of the consummation of his bliss; His deceptive appeal to Henriette. Davison's fidelity impeached. A Forged Letter. A gross act of Brutality about to be committed. The Narrator. Recognition. A Fierce Struggle. Henriette's supplications for her Friend. A Conscious-stricken Man. The Red Man. His cruel alternative to Henriette. Her sacrifice to save her Friend. A moment of unutterable Agony. Death of the Feelings. A desperate attempt to Escape frustrated.

CHAPTER XXI.

Change of Policy. A gloomy Marriage Feast. The Ceremony. A hopeless Intervention. The Narrator summarily dealt with. The Death Struggle. The Spirit World. A Delightful Vision. Davison's Escape. How he comes to the Narrator's assistance; His Story. Some good that Whisky did. Spiritual Medicine. Providential Interference. Rendering thanks to God. Matilda. A Sad Sight. A Poisoned Woman. How News circulates in a little Town. How Neighbors' Characters are found out. Mrs. Labial and "Neighbor over the fence." The Town Pump. Mrs. Labial "makes tracks." The Story about Jack. The astonishment and horror of the Burghers at the late Tragedy. Judge Lynch. "The Birds are flown." "Sloping."

CHAPTER XXII.

The Red Man, Jim, brought to Trial. A Corncrib Court-house. The Country "'Squire;" His Library and "Court Fixins." Pettifoggers. Law in the Country. The Pettifogging Doctor. The County Seat Attorney, Mr. McLaughlin, Esq. Country Lawyers. Symptoms of being Whiskyized. A Lawyer's Fee. "Fixes it up." The Elephant of Law made to perform astonishing evolutions. Legal Lore. Wonderful "Precedents." The "'Squire" is able to defend one side of the case. Mr. Blower insists on being advocate for the State. Mr. McLaughlin, Esq.'s Speech. Hits the "'Squire" and his Wife between "Wind and Water." The Verdict. Singular manner of disposing of Criminals in the Northwest. The Attorney looks out for the "main chance." Return to Cincinnati. A happy Company depart for home. Waiting for a Letter.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A large Letter. A most interesting and exciting Narrative from the Schoolmaster. A Trip down the Mississippi. Mysterious Passengers. Matilda and Henriette missing. Mr. Brandon and Davison return to ———. Waiting for a Steamboat. The Father stricken down with despair. Fruitless Search. A Clue. The Little Boy's Story. Pursuit. A Mississippi Homestead. Negro "Frolic and Breakdown." Phil lets it out; His "dicker" with the strange men. The "Handsum Wimen." Important Discovery. A Night Ride through the Woods. Phil's Cabin in the Woods. "Just in Time." An Exciting Scene. Henriette Saved. Sam's Cabin. Important Arrest. A Happy Liberation. A couple of "bad-scared" Negroes. Air Castles Demolished. "Massa Jennins." "Perfectly astonished." Going to Court. Bound Over. A Mississippi Lawyer. Landor's Letter to his Wife. Faleau's Letter to Miss Callan. Return to ———. A happy Reunion.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Arrive Home. A Model Plantation. Life in Louisiana. Other Letters received, a month having elapsed. Joyful Tidings. A most happy arrangement "all round." "The Happiest of Men." A perfect enjoyment of earthly bliss. Joyous Conclusion.

LENDERMAN'S ADVENTURES

AMONG THE

SPIRITUALISTS AND FREE-LOVERS.

CHAPTER I.

Introduction. Reasons for writing this book. A trip down the Mississippi in January, 1856. A beautiful Female Corpse taken from the River at ——. The Locket and its Miniature. A burning Steamer.

INTRODUCTION.

The causes that led the author into such a practical acquaintance with the workings of Spiritualism and Free-Loveism, as the following pages will indicate, was, in the first place, the incident of a beautiful female corpse being found under very mysterious circumstances; whose death was afterward traced to the door of these nefarious delusions.

And the author was further incited to an exposition of their evil tendencies, by having some of those he held dearest on earth fall victims to these fell destroyers.

* * * * *

In the mid-winter of 1856, I was a passenger on the steamer *William Noble*, bound for New Orleans. As we rounded up to the levee at ——, I noticed a crowd of people collected a few rods above where the steamer landed. They seemed intently occupied with some object in their midst. With the curiosity of all humans

traveling, with only now and then an object to excite the curiosity, as is the case in descending the Mississippi in the winter time, I insinuated myself into the crowd, and soon saw what attracted its attention. The first sight struck me with feelings very discordant in their nature; feelings of admiration commingled with feelings of horror. There lay a corpse,—a female corpse;—it was stretched on a rude plank. The dripping garments told whence it came. A corpse did I say? Imagine not a bloated, disfigured object, with slimy skin, protruding tongue, and staring eyes; but an angelic form, perfect in every lineament of female beauty, sleeping "that breathless sleep that knows no waking." I scarce could believe that the lovely form before me was inanimate. It seemed as though those delicate eyelids, with their long black lashes, should open and display the crystal mirrors of a spotless soul. I watched to see that deep chest heave its alabaster whiteness. But no! those eyelids opened not, that deep chest heaved not,—she was dead,—that beautiful being! The coldness of the water, no doubt, was the cause of this perfect preservation of the features.

She was dressed in a rich but tasteful style, combining comfort with elegance. Around her small white neck was a beautifully worked collar. A scolloped cloth cape, of finest texture, covered her round, tapering shoulders; over this was a splendid large shawl and victorine. Her dress was a plaid silk, covering underclothes of spotless whiteness and beautifully embroidered. Her small, delicate foot and ankle were incased in a close-fitting gaiter. Her head was covered with an opera netting, and a brown silk handkerchief, tied under the chin. She wore a gold watch and a necklace: to the latter was attached a golden cross,

" I scarce could believe that the lovely form before me was inanimate."

set with jewels at its upper part. Her dress was low in the bosom, so that the standard of the cross was seen resting between the risings of her breast. On the forefinger of the right hand was a ring, set with a beautiful diamond. Three letters were engraven on the inside of the ring.

A coroner's jury was holding its inquest over the body at the time. No clue had been found to her history, and the stereotyped verdict was about being rendered by the pompous and officious foreman, "The deceased came to her death by drowning," when a little boy whispered to one of the jurymen, "What is that shiny little thing in her bosom?" pointing to a glittering object just visible under the edge of her dress. The juryman, acting on this suggestion, drew forth a beautiful gold and pearl-mounted porte-monnaie; although it seemed a desecration for his rough hand to be thus rudely thrust into her bosom.

With that peculiar expression of physiognomy indicating a consciousness of superior penetration, he gave himself great credit for the discovery. The foreman stopped short in his verdict at "drown," just before getting the "ing" out, and reaching forth his hand with that supreme authority, which none but a small official can display, took the porte-monnaie, and with raised eyebrows, depressed cheeks, and elongated features generally, intended to impress on the minds of the bystanders an idea of the awful responsibilities that were resting on him, he took the porte-monnaie, and unclasping it, drew forth something wrapped up in several thicknesses of paper, which being easily slipped off, from its being saturated with water, displayed a gold locket, on one side of which was a daguerreotype miniature of a gentleman; on the other side was

inclosed a braid of hair of a dark-brown color,—a shade lighter than the tresses that shone in such contrast with the whiteness of the beautiful corpse.

The same curiosity that drew me to the spot, caused me to notice particularly the features of the likeness found under such mysterious circumstances. The original of that likeness must have been a very handsome man, I thought; although there was an expression of countenance that started a suspicion in my mind in reference to the case before me. It seemed to me that those eyes, though bright and intelligent, glowed with the light of sensuality rather than pure genius; they seemed gloating over some sensual pleasure about to be enjoyed. And this was the general expression of the countenance; it was pleasant, it smiled, but it seemed the libertine's smile over vanquished virtue.

I glanced again at the corpse. An appearance struck me that could not have been the result of ordinary decomposition, for that had not as yet taken place. Perhaps my professional character caused me to notice this appearance sooner than others. I called the foreman aside, and suggested the propriety of a post-mortem examination, telling him my reasons. He acquiesced and invited me to preside at the examination. I told him I would, if the boat remained long enough. After going aboard and ascertaining that the boat would remain for a couple of hours, I took a case of dissecting instruments from my trunk, and was conducted to a little room near by, into which the corpse had been taken, and which was occupied by the jury alone. I made the examination and found my suspicions confirmed; she had been *enceinte* for about four months. I had no time to stay longer for the boat's bell was ringing, and I hurried on board.

Strange thoughts occupied my mind,—thoughts of the sad scene I had just witnessed. Having been broken of my rest the night before, I retired early to my state-room, and soon fell into a disturbed, dreamy sleep. Strange images haunted my brain. That beautiful corpse seemed living before me, and with countenance and voice prostrated with grief, she fell at the feet of a man resembling him of the locket, clasping his knees in wild despair and imploring him with tears and supplications to save her from worse than death,—from infamy! He pushed her from him with an unfeeling smile more cruel than the bitterest curse. She shrieked and fell insensible to the floor. I awoke. It was a dream. That shriek was the steamer's whistle. A bright red light was glowing through the stateroom door opening on the guard. An unusual commotion of voices and tramping of feet was heard in every part of the boat. The thought flashed through my mind that the boat was on fire, although no alarm of fire was heard. I jumped from my berth and rushed to the guard; a glance explained it all.* We were rounding up to a burning steamer. What an awful sight! She was glowing like a furnace; the flames crackling and her splendid finishings dissolving away before the devouring element. Horrid groans came from the burning mass. Could it be human beings that were thus being burned alive? Oh what a horrid thought! Between the boat and bank were seen female forms, in their night-clothes, wading to their arms along the uncertain bank, their faces and shoulders scorched by the heat. The bow of the burning steamer touches the

* The steamer Mediator was burned below ——, on the night of the 5th of January, 1856.

bank,—she is swinging round toward them,—another moment and they are lost! Brave-hearted fellows are assisting them through the deep water at the risk of their own lives. They reach a ravine in which is moored a small boat,—they are drawn into it. Thank God! they are saved! I can see now that the groans are from horses and cattle tied on the deck. Oh what suffering these poor animals endure! A voice from the bank cries, "Mate, are they all saved?" "Yes," answers from the ravine.

The *Noble* (and she well deserves the name) took aboard the unfortunate, or rather, fortunate beings, many of whom had on but a single garment, and that frozen stiff as a sheeting of ice. The table-covers served to protect the females until they were brought into the ladies' cabin, and there they were provided with warm clothing, and their blistered wounds dressed with the tenderest care. One young lady was a most beautiful being, and the heart shuddered to think that one so lovely was so near being consumed in the ruthless flames. Every attention possible was paid to the sufferers. Indeed it almost made shipwreck desirable, if the wrecked were sure of being picked up by such a *Noble* crew.

For days I could not get that scene at —— from my mind. Some mysterious and horrid crime seemed associated with the affair. Although actual violence and bloodshed did not appear connected with it, yet a deeper crime, the murder of the heart,—the soul,—infinitely more atrocious than that which is punished by killing the body, seemed pointing its bloody finger to the man of the locket. Business and the gayeties of the "Crescent City," finally drove these gloomy thoughts, for the most part, from my mind; although when alone, with

none to commune with but myself, that corpse would again appear, that locket would again show its braid of brown hair, and its smiling image.

CHAPTER II.

Return to ——. Obtain the Ring taken from the finger of the beautiful Corpse. The Queen City in the middle of the "Cold Winter." A Spirituo-Freelove Meeting; its Male and Female Attendants; its Entertainments.

ABOUT the middle of February I was on my return from New Orleans. I longed for the time when we should arrive at ——, hoping that I might learn something more concerning the mysterious corpse. The boat was to remain but a short time at that point, not having much freight to discharge, which would render my chances for inquiry rather limited. When we were approaching the landing, by the potent influence of a few "quarters," the deck-hands shoved a plank out, that enabled me to get ashore some minutes before I otherwise could have done. After almost despairing of finding a person that knew any thing about the jurymen who held the inquest, a lame fellow, whose inquisitive countenance and seedy garments pointed him out as being one of those *Free Intelligence Men* whose only business is to attend punctually to what is going on about town, philanthropically discharging this important public service without hope of honor or compensation, spoke up and said: "Mr. M——, the foreman of that jury lives but a step from here."

"Take me there as quickly as possible, and here is a half-dollar for your trouble."

This unaccustomed stimulus made the short leg travel remarkably, considering the roughness of the pavement, but it seemed a snail-gait to me. As soon as he pointed out the house I left him, and in a moment, found myself with the official aforesaid. Nothing had been learned in relation to the affair. The jewelry and clothing were in the possession of Mr. M——. The corpse had been interred in the city cemetery. Mr. M—— consented to my taking the ring with the engraved letters, on my depositing with him twice its estimated value in money. I left my address, and promised to return the ring if it were called for.

Again I was on my way. I now gave up all hope of ever learning more of the matter, and consigned it with its beautiful subject to the grave of oblivion. Finally, by steamboat, stage, and railroad, I arrived at Cincinnati. I found the Queen City perfectly congealed—its river, streets, water-pipes, cisterns, and even the gas seemed to have frozen in its tardy course. All that was wanting, after sunset, to make an Arctic landscape, were the aurora borealis and the white bear. Business was stagnant; even the odor of pork-houses on upper Broadway, was bearable, for King Frost had forced a cessation of hostilities in the hog war.

The levee, so full of life at ordinary times, was now deserted. The bar-keepers on Water-street felt sensibly that "Othello's occupation" was gone. Instead of steamboats going out or seeking a crevice to insinuate their bows, sleighs and huge wood-wagons, and long columns of pedestrians were passing and repassing the Ohio in perfect security. Even grim Death had been frozen out, for scarcely a doctor could be seen in his carriage unless he was going to set some limb, broken by a fall on the icy pavements. The peanut and toy

women, in spite of their big cloaks and charcoal fires, were fairly driven from their corners. The newsboys were the only undaunted soldiers in the field, for with vermilion faces, and icicled noses, and shrill voices, they filled the air with frozen "Evening Times—three o'clock edition;" "Arrival of the Baltic;" "All about the Runaway Niggers;" "Only half a dime!"

The only establishments that did any business at all, were the places of amusement. People seemed desirous of seeing others work, if they could not work themselves. Entertainments were well attended that would hardly have been noticed in busier times. There were the Hutchinsons singing Anti-Slavery and Hydropathic songs to halls-full. There was Prof. —— making a kettle-drum of himself, and there was Mrs. McC—— peafowling it most scientifically. Mrs. F—— had been "bobbing around," and "Our Mary Anning" it until she had bobbed quite a little sum into "Our Mary Ann's" pocket. Then there were the "Infernal Regions," the Big Sheep on Fifth street, the "Lager Bier Institute," exhibits of doctor-factories, and nightly scintillations of genius in the shape of twenty-five cent lectures. On Sunday evenings political speeches could be heard without going to Washington. Every Sunday, in the forenoon, telegraphic dispatches from the Spirit Land were obtainable at ten cents per communication—Office of the combined Spiritual and Free-Love lines at the Mechanic's Institute.

Every Sunday afternoon a delectable intellectuo-sensuo-spiritual repast was served up at the above-named office, in the shape of a discussion on Free-Love. A delicious treat it was, and it was enjoyed by a highly appreciative audience (judging from the frequent applauses manifested in stampings, and clappings, and

hissings). The principal speakers appeared to be a two-and-a-half-rate lawyer (not Mr. O'Flinnigen,) a liliputian sprout from some such legal stock as the above, in the shape of a little sorrel-headed, turned-up-nosed Cicero, who imagined he was not only eloquent and logical, but majestically lady-killing (a universal delusion of liliputianism). A street-preacher, neither sane nor insane, neither white nor black, insisted, with tempestuous ravings and windmill gestures, that man had a perfect right to do just as he "darned pleased." His harangue was once abbreviated as to length and energy by some ill-mannered fellow suggesting, that said principle of man, doing as he "darned pleased," did not hold good during a coercive residence in a certain public institution. This suggestion seemed to turn his oratory into a less vociferous channel, as though it brought to mind unpleasant reminiscences of the past. Another character was an unshaved bison from the backwoods, who prided himself on being a perfectly illiterate but natural philosopher—a hairy, skinny, wrinkled, and bold champion of Free-Love. If the ladies wanted something natural, unsophisticated, here they had it—the pure ore.

Another portrait in this group of illustrious reformers was that of a round and bald-headed, short-necked, sandy-whiskered, white eyebrowed, and thick-set little man, who brought his wife (I suppose) and child to learn the very agreeable intelligence that he did not consider himself bound to continue his matrimonial relations with said wife any longer than chance should throw some fairer one in his way (which circumstance, it must be admitted, might possibly occur). His wife, however, seemed determined to get as much out of him as she could before his passional electricity should attract him to some other object: for between speaking

"Every Sunday afternoon a delectable intellectuo-sensuo-spiritual repast was served up at the above-named office, in the shape of a discussion on Free-Love."

and "tending baby," he was the busiest man in the room.

But when the chieftain of the Free-Lovers arose, the leader of the hosts of —— the hall ——, all other characters became imperceptible. He stood like an impregnable tower, tall, erect, his curious, inexplicable eyes, gleaming out from behind their shadings of dark hair, dark eyebrows, dark moustaches, and dark whiskers, like the eyes of a serpent, gleaming in the dark passage of its rocky cavern. His reasoning, to the superficial thinker, bore the semblance of truth.

The music of those heavenly words, Liberty, Freedom, and Love so threw its melody over his discourse as to drown the horrid discords of its principles. The thinking hearer was left in doubt whether to consider him an arch-hypocrite, or a very intelligent man, whose mind had been distorted by the visionary reveries of Spiritualism.

The audience was "mixed," in the true sense of the word. There were gray-headed men whose "passional feelings," it would seem, should have given place to a feeling after eternal salvation. There were young men in the vigor of manhood, the object of whose attendance was very apparent. The most of the male attendants were, however, middle-aged, hard-featured and hirsute men, whose countenances exhibited three striking features: a mask of hair, a pair of gleaming, devouring eyes, and a subtermoustachial opening. Although a few of them appeared to be accompanied by their legal consorts, the observer would get the impression, judging from the expression of their countenances during the advancement of different principles by the speakers, that they would rather have left said wives at home, and, that they rejoiced in the prospective Free-

Love millennium which would enable them to throw aside their old unfashionable wives, and take a new style every six months, at least.

The female portion of the audience came mostly by themselves; indicating extraordinary self-confidence, or else a lack of that "passional electricity," which should have drawn some male to their side. A majority of these females appeared to have passed that culminating point where female charms exert their most powerful influence, without having become aware of it; still thinking they ruled on the throne of youthful beauty, and wondering why homage was not paid to them as of yore. Unhappy delusion! which their mirrors would have dispelled if reflected on aright. A dash of strong-mindedness in their sharp features indicated that a vague presentiment of crumbling thrones might have flitted through their minds and stimulated them to an exaction of coercive homage to their power. At least, we, as a modest non-resistant, acknowledged an unmanly trepidation when the hawk-eyes of these Amazons directed hitherward their not-to-be-resisted currents of "passional electricity."

Some of these females appeared to be widows, or "grass widows," at least, if there is any confidence to be placed in Mr. Weller's remarks on "Vidders." Others appeared to be spinsters, still clinging to the forlorn hope; while a few specimens could not, by any possibility, have come there with any hope of reciprocity of "passional attraction;" for they were not only old, wrinkled, skinny, gray, toothless, but actually deformed by hirsute appendages, wry necks, or hunchbacks.

There were some exceptions to these descriptions. They were not all long lank-sided, hollow-jawed, sallow-skinned, deformed termagants, insisting on what no man

with *human feelings* could give—his love. Some really good-looking females were there—females, who, one would have supposed, could have obtained reciprocal love that was not so cheap as the article in that market. If these good-looking females came there to be noticed, they were fully gratified; for they were "the observed of all observers," both male and female. By the former they were gazed on with the gloating, lascivious eyes of passional desire; by the latter with the green-eyed side-glance of torturing envy. These comely females obtained, no doubt, a plenty of "*passional*" *admirers*.

The style of the discussion was as free as the subject. As an illustration of its freedom, I will introduce a quotation which was read from a standard spiritual work and indorsed by the chieftain then present. It was to this effect, that "the woman is more an audulteress who sleeps nightly with her legal husband, whom she does not love, than she who sleeps promiscuously with many men; for in the latter case she will occasionally embrace the man she loves." One left these meetings with a feeling of disgust at human nature thus degenerated—thus prostituting the noblest of its attributes to the basest distortions of its animal passions; and not without a feeling of fear, also, that such public advocacy of prostitution, and that, too, on the most sacred grounds and on the most sacred of days, would have a tendency to subvert those social laws that now bind together the family circle with the sacred ties of holy relationship. With what subtile and flowery speech can evil disguise itself! How apt is poor, weak humanity to be deceived and led into error by the power of darkness, arrayed in the robes of heavenly light! Oh! how dangerous to the temporal and eternal welfare

of the yet virtuous, to listen to the harmonial warblings of these spiritual vultures, with fronts gentle and unassuming as the dove, but with hearts blacker than Tartarean darkness, and with principles fit only for the lowest depths of hell. But let the victim, who is about being fascinated with this delusive music of the arch-fiend, read the eye of the enchanter, and she will there see the fires of sensuality glowing in all their animal ferocity, gloating over and devouring, in anticipation, her virtue—her life-blood—her soul!

Beware, then, Oh virtuous woman! how you listen to the first strains of that syren music which tells you your virtue and constancy are an incumbrance to your enjoyment. Beware how you tarry in your virtuous path to look down the broad, flowery avenue of unlicensed love, lest you be tempted to walk therein, from which you can not return untainted and pure!

CHAPTER III.

A Scene at the National Theater. Recognition of a Mysterious Character. Plan for obtaining an Interview. A Spiritualist's Parlor.

AT this time the beautiful and heart-touching play of Camille was being performed at the "National" theater. With a large company from the —— House, I strayed there one evening, and found myself pleasantly seated in the Dress-circle of this well-arranged play-house. The Dress-circle, Parquette, and Box-tier were well filled: the first, with the fashion; the second, with the intellectual; the third, with those who "could see just as well from the boxes for a quarter as those beneath them

could for half a dollar." The third tier, which is considered neither "respectable" nor "vulgar"—being an anomalous department, a sort of a middle ground between the two classes to be occupied by neither—was nearly empty, while the fourth tier was well filled by those whose position was decided and unquestionable. Opera-glasses protruded themselves in the Dress-circle, like turtles' heads in a millpond, seeing what they could see. One would suppose that the occupants of the Dress-circle were all oculists or dentists examining minutely the motes in their neighbors' eyes or the cavities in their teeth; or else, that Cincinnati upper-tendom had all of a sudden become inveterate naturalists, and were examining, microscopically, the intimate anatomy, both normal and abnormal, of every remarkable specimen beneath the Box-tier, with a view probably of classifying said specimens, to see which in reality were naturally tropical, *dress-circle plants*, and which were exotics belonging to *higher latitudes*. The natural and artificial beauties of the performers were also subjected to this microscopical examination, revealing, probably, some such physical facts as these: that red paint, drawn transversely across the forehead, is the proximate cause of wrinkles, instead of care and old age, as is generally supposed; that vermilion, instead of arterial blood, gives redness to the cheeks, and that flour, instead of fright, blanches them; that large calves are made up of cotton-bats and old newspapers, instead of muscle. In fact, the theater affords a whole world for the investigation of these diligent and enthusiastic naturalists. So vast is the field, indeed, that they have not even commenced, as yet, on the upper strata, for seldom was a glass directed to the upper tiers, unless it were that of some inexperienced miss in her teens,

whose taste was not sufficiently cultivated to distinguish the difference between beauty in the upper, from that in the lower tiers.

Our scientific cogitations, however, were suddenly arrested by an object directly opposite—a gentleman whose features seemed to strike me with a peculiar, inexpressible sensation, suggestive of some painful reminiscence. I looked, and looked again. It seemed as though I had seen that countenance, and yet I could not tell where. I commenced analyzing his features—recognition suddenly flashed on my mind. It was the face of the locket. If he had seen my face at that instant, I fear he would have noticed an expression of fearful interest in his behalf. The play and the gay circle around had but little attraction to me after that. I could not keep my eyes from that countenance. The pale corpse of the Mississippi seemed to rise at my side and whisper, "That is he." My absence, or rather intense occupation of mind was noticed by those near me, and more than once was I addressed the second time before answering.

By the side of this gentleman sat a woman who once was beautiful; her tall, symmetric form, her delicately-drawn features, her rich dark hair, her deep, soul-speaking eyes told how brilliant she once had been. But those features were now clouded. Trouble and grief had unquestionably thrown their dark shadings over them. Her melancholy look showed that despair had long since usurped the throne of her earthly bliss. Her adoring but subdued glances on him at her side, spoke too plainly of unreciprocated love.

The last act of the play was being performed. Camille had sunk on her dying couch, overcome by the unnatural exertion that the excitement of her loved

Armand's return and reconciliation had produced. Already her angelic soul was taking its flight to the spirit world. The theater was a sea of streaming eyes, a vast alcove of whispering sighs. Stillness, almost painful, reigned through those living tiers. My eyes were still drawn to their attracting magnet. That closing scene worked changes in his countenance which painful recollections alone could produce. Self-condemnation unmistakable haunted his tortured soul. The scene was painful to him. Often did he glance around him suspiciously and on the being by his side, as though he feared his uneasiness would be noticed—as though he feared some horrid revelation which should consign him to ruin and infamy. His companion seemed perfectly absorbed in the play; her soul united in sympathy with Camille. More than the ordinary appreciation of good acting affected her; the tears that silently coursed down her pale cheeks, flowed from a heart-felt stimulus.

The curtain dropped at the close of the last scene. I resolved to find the residence of this gentleman and lady. While the majority of the audience was waiting, amid deafening yells and stampings to see Miss Heron come before the curtain, I made my way out, and came directly in contact with the objects of my search, as they were leaving the entrance of the theater. I kept near enough so as not to lose sight of them, nor yet be noticed, which was easily done, as they walked in the middle of the street (the sidewalks being so icy as to render them dangerous). Very few words passed between them, and these were monosyllables and quickly spoken.

Finally, after a long walk, they stopped at an iron railing before a medium-sized brick house, situated

a few feet back from the street. The gentleman unlocked the gate and they entered the house at the back door. Having noticed the number of the house and the name of the street, I returned to my hotel just in time to be taken to task for leaving my company in such an abrupt manner at the theater. I had been so taken up with my adventure, that the impropriety of my sudden departure had not occurred to me until I entered the parlor and heard my acquaintances discussing certain singular actions which I knew had reference to myself. One young lady was just saying, "I think he must have been struck with Mrs. Guysot, the spiritualist's wife, his attention seemed so perfectly absorbed in that direction."

"Mrs. who did you say?" I asked, perfectly off my guard.

"Didn't I tell you so?" giggled the little minx; and she made the parlor ring with laughter at my expense. "I wonder if he hasn't killed Mr. G—— and brought his pretty wife to our cave here. Quite a romantic adventurer, I declare. Say, ——, did you get wounded in the encounter?" and she went on; as the saying is, "I could not put in a word edgewise." And if I could have done it, I hardly know what word it would have been.

When I had retired to my room, I examined the letters in the ring. They did not correspond with the name the young lady had mentioned. But then she might have been mistaken as to the persons who attracted my attention during the evening. Nothing could dissuade me from the belief that he was the original of that likeness of the locket. And then this ring might have been given her by some one else. And might not this gentleman have changed his name? I had that

opinion of his character that would warrant such a supposition.

It was two o'clock before I went to bed, and then sleep did not accompany me. In vain did I try to drive thought from my mind—it would return. It appeared as though all the blood of my body was trying to get into my brain, which seemed laboring to devise some plan to resolve the doubts and anxieties that crowded there. A plan suggested itself at last by which I could become introduced to the gentleman, and, perhaps satisfy myself as to whether my suspicions were right or not. If this gentleman be a spiritualist, thought I, he will be anxious to buy any new work on Spiritualism, or any new physiological works that promise to give new ideas on that subject. I will assume the character of a book agent. I will hunt up some new books on these subjects, works that have just been published, and call on him to sell them, and thus get an introduction and satisfy my mind as to his relation with the mysterious locket.

Having perfected my plan, I was enabled to fall into a doze of sleep toward morning, from which I was wakened by the breakfast bell. "How do you feel this morning?" asked my fair tormentress, as I took my seat at the table. "I think —— looks kind of drowsy this morning; don't you think so, Lizzy? The sorrowful Mrs. Guysot must have haunted him last night."

"Why, Mag, I really begin to think you are getting jealous of Mrs. Guysot, I declare," retorted Lizzy.

This new view of the matter was immediately indorsed by the whole company, which turned the joke fairly on the joker: and I must acknowledge that her crimson face and stammering words rather confirmed the suggestion.

After breakfast, having made some inquiries of a foreman printer who boarded at the hotel, as to the different publishing houses and as to the nature of the books they were then publishing, I was induced to call at the "—— house," which the printer said, was just issuing a series of Physiological and Medical works. A part of the works had been stereotyped at the establishment over which the foreman presided, and he had thereby become acquainted with their contents.

I was welcomed into the office of the above-named publishing house with all the attention and politeness that an enthusiastic book agent could desire. I told the proprietor I wished an agency for the new Physiological works he was publishing.

The book publisher was warming up in the eulogy of his ware, when I interrupted him by saying, that I thought I would take an agency for these books—at least I would start out and try it, and if the business paid me better than any other, I might continue in it.

"Mr. ——," he said, addressing his head clerk, "will you furnish this gentleman some pamphlet copies of '——?'"

The proprietor then sat down and gave me a regular lecture on "book-selling," and so eloquent was he on its beauties and profits, its benefits to the body, mind, pocket, and to humanity at large, that he almost persuaded me to become a *bona fide* book agent and to leave all other callings for this.

The clerk soon entered with a copy of each of the above-named works in a half-finished condition, without being trimmed or bound, and minus the illustrations—the engravings of which were not yet finished. I took them and was about leaving, when the proprietor called me back and asked what district I wanted to

canvass in. After thinking a moment, I concluded to take that part of the city bounded by Fifth street on the south, Walnut on the east, and the Canal on the north, extending westward to Mill Creek. This, I knew, would include No. ——, —— street. In going up Main street I noticed, in the show-window of a bookstore, the advertisement of a new work on Spiritualism, by Prof. ——. This was just what I wanted, and I soon had it under my arm with the others.

It was now nine o'clock. This is not too early to call, I thought. If I don't call pretty early I may not find him at home; and so I bent my steps toward No. ——, —— street. With not a little misgiving and trepidation I drew the bell-knob. I had committed a great oversight in not thinking over what to say in my new capacity of book agent. This thought coming suddenly on my mind, already wavering as to the propriety of the adventure, quite disconcerted me; and when the door opened, and a young woman of prepossessing appearance and address stood before me, my tongue "cleaved to the roof of my mouth." I know that I must have cut a ridiculous figure, indeed. By good luck, a book fell from my relaxed arm, prompting me in my part. "Is the gentleman of the house in?" I asked.

"He is, sir; walk in," she replied, in a sweet, but apparently melancholy voice.

I soon found myself seated on a large and voluptuous sofa, surrounded by all the magnificent appointments of a fashionable parlor. Easy-chairs, lounges, and *tete-a-tetes* of the latest style, were tastefully arranged around the room. The walls were hung with oil paintings—exquisite delineations of the male and female perfections of the human form—close and free imitations of nature.

One painting in particular—a representation of Don Juan and Haide—was a perfect specimen of art. Even the costly carpet and brilliant rugs were inwoven with voluptuous pictures that would well become the golden frames that adorned the walls. The center-table was covered with richly-bound copies of Swedenborg, Byron, Davis, Paine, Ovid, and a variety of spiritual books and journals. A number of daguerreotypes were also strewed over the table. But in vain did I look among those likenesses of handsome men and women for the image of the beautiful corpse. The rich and peculiar ornaments of the parlor strengthened my conviction that I was on the right track; and the character of the books on the table satisfied me that Miss D—— was right in her surmises.

CHAPTER IV.

A Spiritual Leader. Suspicions Confirmed. Matilda De Long, the Spiritualist's Chambermaid. The Ring of the beautiful Corpse recognized. An Interesting Scene. A Visit to the People's Theater. An Affectionate Couple.

THE door opened suddenly and noiselessly on my thoughts, and the man of the theater, the image of the locket, stood before me. He must have noticed a perturbation in my manner, unbecoming a bookseller, for I was conscious of exhibiting it.

"I have some new Physiological and Spiritual works here," said I, with as good grace as I could command, "and I called to see if you would not like to subscribe for them."

Here I went on with rather a highly-colored eulogy of my books. "This work, '————,' beside containing

a history of every diseased condition of the human body, contains a fund of useful and wonderful knowledge on the mysteries of Procreation."

"What is that?" said my listener, eagerly grasping the book and glancing over the back part of it. "I 'll take this book," he said. "Can't you spare me this copy now?" he continued. "I would like very much to read it to-day. I don't care any thing about its being bound."

"It will put me to some trouble getting another specimen to canvass with," I replied.

"Well, here, I will subscribe for all your other books, and will pay you three times your price for this—will that compensate you sufficiently?" he asked—"although I don't care a fig about this Spiritual work of Prof. ——. I have more such books now than I shall ever read."

It called to my mind the incident of the man from Honduras, who brought a cargo of Sarsaparilla to New York, expecting a very ready sale of it, at a large advance, to the Sarsaparilla Sirup and Extract manufacturers, but who was set a-back not a little on being told by one of the Sarsaparilla princes, that they never used Sarsaparilla, in their Sarsaparilla Sirups, at all. So it occurred to me that manufacturers of Spiritualism were poor men to sell Spiritual books to. His countenance seemed to change after thus speaking lightly of Spiritual books, as though he had committed a blunder.

"Can't you leave me this copy of Prof. ——?" he continued; "it may contain some new ideas on this heavenly science," and he might have added, as he glanced over the volumes on his table, "it may help to delude my dupes as well as the rest of these books; I am considered a very apostle of Spiritualism, and the more show I can make the greater my influence."

I consented to his proposal, and after receiving my pay for the books, I asked if I should call on him again, if I came across any new works on the same subjects.

"Most certainly. I am anxious to obtain all the new lights on Spiritualism," he replied, with a half-serious, half-smiling face, which said, as plain as a face could say, that he thought less of these works than his words would lead one to believe.

I departed with a firmer resolution than ever of following up this thing to its source. My object now was to obtain a history of this individual. How was I to do it? A new Spiritual book must be found—no difference if it is not new, it will afford an excuse for calling, and by calling, something new may turn up. The thought once occurred to me of openly accusing him of being the murderer of the drowned young lady, as I have frequently seen guilty parties condemn themselves by being thus accused at random. But then I had no evidence, and this heroic stroke might not only frustrate my plan, by putting him on his guard, but might get me into serious difficulty. Spiritual books! They shall be the cards by which I will win the game! Would it not assist my cause if I should become a Spiritualist myself, and thus be brought in closer connection with him? But then I have assumed the character of a book-agent. He does not suppose me to be very rich; this, no doubt, would be an effectual bar against my getting into his private circle. The purses of men and the charms of women have unquestionably more weight with him than any other consideration. I resolved to stick to the old card.

Not three days had passed before I was at the door of No—— —— street again; it was opened by the same female, to whom I communicated the same errand as on

my previous visit. She said Mr. Guysot was not in. "I think he will be in soon, however, won't you walk in and wait?"

I accepted her invitation, rather against my sense of fashionable propriety, I confess; but then I thought they might consider me some unpolished fellow who did not understand city etiquette, and thus excuse me. My fair conductress picked up a piece of beautiful embroidery from the parlor sofa, and was about leaving the room, when I arose and said I did not wish to interfere with her convenience, and would call another time. She took the hint, and sat down on the sofa, and commenced working. By degrees, the formal and stereotyped phrases of fashionable conversation gave way to a free and interesting talk between us. The conversation naturally turned on Spiritualism and its supposed advocate, Mr. Guysot. I became satisfied, from her manner of speaking on the subject, that she, and Mr. Guysot, and his wife, were not such deluded devotees to the system as they had credit for.

I noticed a change in her features and tone of voice every time she spoke of Mr. or Mrs. Guysot, leading the observer to suspect that there was a closer relation existing between them than that of servant and employer. As the conversation progressed, growing freer and less guarded, it became evident that her situation was unpleasant here, and that she desired to get out of it.

Then the idea occurred to me of breaking the whole plot to her, and taking her in as an associate in carrying it out. I resolved on it, and broached the subject in this rather abrupt manner:

"It seems that Mr. and Mrs. Guysot have done you some great wrong—"

She started to her feet, dropped her embroidery, and with expanded eyes, and parted lips, and rigid arms, she stared at me for a moment in the greatest perturbation. A new thought seemed to flash across her mind—her features relaxed as she spoke:

"What did I say? I was only in jest; they have done me no wrong," and she tried to laugh: it was that forced, sardonic laugh that pains the hearer by its hollowness. When she had recovered herself somewhat, and had sat down again on the sofa, trying to resume her work with trembling fingers and features rendered more beautiful by her spasmodic efforts to be calm, I again addressed her, as near as I can recollect, as follows:

"I understand the whole matter, and I think you and I are engaged in similar undertakings; and further, I believe we can be of great assistance to each other."

She again sat motionless, staring at me, drinking my words with fearful avidity.

"What! are you not a bookseller" she exclaimed.

"No," I answered. "I am trying to trace out a plot more mysterious and horrible than was ever written in a book; a plot of real life, more strange than that of fiction."

I here bethought me of the ring. Some instinct seemed prompting me at every step, commanding me to advance, assuring me that I was right, although my evidence, as yet, was entirely circumstantial and insufficient to substantiate the identity of Mr. Guysot with the original of the likeness of the locket. And even if it were sufficient, what then? I would occasionally ask myself. What if the drowned young lady did have a daguerreotype likeness of Mr. Guysot on her person? Some unseen influence whispered that a fearful moral

tragedy was connected with it, whose horrid details would be developed by bringing these circumstances together. This influence seemed to urge me onward, and to impress me with the conviction that it was a duty I owed to society to trace out the history of this plot and give it to the public as a warning against a scorpion that is secretly, but too surely, insinuating its poison into the very heart of society.

I drew out my porte-monnaie, and having unclasped its inner partition, took thence the ring, wrapped up in a piece of thin paper. I undid the paper and handed the ring to her, pointing to the letters on the inside. One glance was all she gave. The ring dropped from her fingers as though it had been molten lead, and she fell to the floor. I raised her beautiful form and laid it gently on the sofa.

I dashed some cold water in her face, from a pitcher standing on the mantle, and she soon revived. With blanched lips and painfully expressive look, she whispered, pointing to the ring which still lay on the floor:

"How came you by it? Where is she?"

"Compose yourself," I replied, "and when you are sufficiently recovered I will tell you all about it."

I put the ring in my vest pocket, perfectly satisfied that it had done its duty.

"Oh, I am recovered," said she, rising up and arranging her hair before the mirror, which frightened her at first, by the pale and terrified image it reflected.

Steps were now heard at the door, the insertion of a key, and the turning of a small bolt.

"They have come," she said, in an agitated whisper. "Come here to-morrow evening at nine o'clock. I shall be alone—" and she rushed out of the parlor at the back door opening into the sitting-room.

Footsteps passed along the hall and entered the sitting-room. In a moment Mr. Guysot entered the parlor, apparently in not a very pleasant mood. He bought one of my books, but I imagined it was to get rid of me more than for want of the book, suggesting, as he paid for it, the possibility of his being able to get what books he needed in future himself, at the bookstores, and thus prevent so great a waste of my *valuable* time in waiting on him. I took the hint most decidedly; it being so plain as to prevent me disposing of it in any other way.

So the Spiritual Book card has played its last trump, thought I, as the front door closed behind me rather firmly. But I have another card, still more available, I imagine; one that promises most certainly to decide the game in my favor. To-morrow evening at nine o'clock! I think there is no need of noting this appointment down. I shall not be apt to forget it.

But how shall the time be occupied till then? I was just passing the Peoples' theater. Its poster advertised Richard III—Wallack; La ——; and the Fool of the Family. At the door, as is the fashion in these days of "every man his own horn-blower hung a cut of—

Yours, etc., WALLACK, JR.

I concluded to put the evening in here as best I could. Not that I cared much about Wallack, Jr., but I wanted to hurry up Old Time—an operation not often to be desired, as he generally walks too fast for the speediest of us.

At seven, I found myself in the Dress Circle, with plenty of room; the streets, being so slippery that night as to render it rather hazardous for delicate slippers to venture out. The audience, after waiting a long time impatiently for the curtain to rise, began to express said

impatience most audibly by a measured and synchronous stamp, the most ludicrous of all kinds of demonstrations of notice by a public audience—a kind of an ironical applause. Presently the stage manager, arrayed *a la mode* Richard, came before the curtain and announced (which operation seemed rather small business for so great a personage as Richard III), that the godlike Wallack, Jr., having incurred the envy of the other gods by the worship he was receiving from mortals, was getting "particular thunder" from them. That said gods had hissed the elements on to this same Wallack, Jr., who was now contending against cold and terrific storms, trying to cut his way through to the City of Pork. For fear that the conductor of the ill-fated train, finding out the Jonah who was causing all this cracking of rails and smashing of wheels, should be tempted to throw said Jonah overboard (as he had a very good precedent for doing) the proprietor of the theater was continually telegraphing to him to put Wallack, Jr., through, and not to mind the expense. What were to have been the closing performances of the evening, the lighter ones, intended to oil over the scorched wounds of the feelings, caused by the burning words of Richard, were introduced first, thus giving the gods time to relent and permit Wallack, Jr., to appear. This serving up of the light plays first, reminded me of a fashion my old grandfather had, of eating his pudding before his meat.

The "Fool of the Family" was done to the darkest kind of a brown, and crusted over. The gym-*nastic* part of it was entirely original. I think it must have been conceded that never before had woman kicked higher with less *accident* than the "Fool of the Family" did on that occasion. I heard a butcher boy, who hung over the gallery some three or four feet, express the

wish to his comrade, that he could have been on the stage behind the side-scenes, during this *acrobatic* performance.

La—— "demonstrated her lower extremities" (as anatomists would say) to the perfect satisfaction of all the deckhands, butchers, and old codgers in the house. It was quite refreshing to see some of the greyheaded old goats dodging their heads round to get the *highest peep*; although there was no need of dodging, for La—— seemed perfectly aware of what was wanted of her, and she seemed no less willing to gratify her admirers by showing *pretty much* all the *charms* she was possessed of. I noticed that applause was given not when she performed any extra feat on the "fantastic toe," but when she whirled around so as to raise the vapory lawn the highest. She was called out again, but could not make the lawn rise any higher than before.

After "Betty's" pudding had been disposed of, which laid *Leight-on*-the-stomach, and said pudding had been settled by the gym-*nastic* exercises of the *angelic* La—— (if substantial wrists and ankles will admit of a winged adjective), Richard III, alias the stage-manager, again made his appearance before the curtain, and announced the *woe*-ful intelligence that the elements had been too much for Wallack, Jr., and that it was now out of the power of mortals or immortals to enable said Wallack to come up to time; but that he, the manager, would endeavor to personate Wallack, Jr., *through* *Richard*, to the best of his abilities, and so the war of the white and the red roses went on.

While the first act of the tragedy was being performed, my eyes caught the glance of another eye in a dark and obscure part of the theater. I saw but a part of the face to which that eye belonged, for the most of

it was covered with a neck-shawl, the upright collar of a circular cloak, and by a fur cap drawn down over the eyebrows; but I saw enough of the face to recognize it as belonging to my Spiritual acquaintance, Mr. Guysot. He noticed me, but by studiously keeping my eyes away from that part of the theater, he soon was put at ease, and sat closer to the female by his side. She was enveloped in a large cloak and hood, which very unfashionably concealed her features. A vail also was drawn partly over her face. Once only did I see her face distinctly, as she raised the vail and gazed intently, for a moment, on a well dressed gentleman in the parquette, who seemed to have passed the culminating point of man's physical vigor. She was not the wife of Mr. Guysot, that I was sure of; her face was pretty, very pretty, but of a different variety of beauty from that of Mrs. Guysot. She had a keen black eye which shot forth the fires of sensual passion most unmistakably. Her ruby lips, parted by the intensity of her gaze, displayed a symmetrical set of pearly teeth; her cheek was full but rather blanched—a natural consequence of hot-house rearing on animal as well as vegetable life. They appeared remarkably affectionate to one another; she rested her head on his shoulder, and he tenderly encircled her waist with his left arm. This excess of "affectional" manifestations would have been presumptive evidence that they were not man and wife, in the absence of other testimony. Using a vulgar expression, they were altogether too affectionate "for safe."

At the dropping of the curtain before the last act, Mr. Guysot and his fair companion left the theater, and I not only followed their example, but had the ill-manners to follow their route. They walked quite briskly,

looking behind occasionally without seeming to see any thing unusual. After walking northwardly a few squares and then eastwardly, they rang the door-bell of a two-story frame house, sitting back from the street, and were admitted.

Although the night was stormy and very disagreeable, I promenaded the street, backward and forward, for about half an hour, when the couple again made their appearance and walked a few squares westward till they came near a splendid mansion, entered from the street by a flight of massive stone steps. They then walked very cautiously on tiptoe, seeming alarmed at the ice crackling under their feet. Having reached the steps, he gave her a very affectionate embrace, and I thought, a kiss (judging from the close proximity of their faces). He went on his course, at first in the same tiptoe fashion, and then less cautiously with heels down as well as toes. She noiselessly ascended the steps, opened the door with a street key, and as still as a ghost, disappeared. A moment after, I saw an object moving in the front room on the second story, which was partially lighted apparently by a coal-fire. The gauze curtains and obscure light just enabled me to make out her form. She seemed to be in a hurry about changing her clothes, and soon, in much lighter costume, drew aside the curtains of a bed, and sank into its feathery billows.

Hardly had I turned my eyes from the window, and directed my steps homeward, when I met the self-same gentleman who had attracted her attention at the theater. I was positive that it was he, as I rubbed close to him near a street-lamp which showed his face distinctly. I kept walking with short steps and turned head till I saw him enter the mansion with the massive stone steps.

I then went home, pondering over the evening's developments. My plot seemed pointing to a positive and definite center, and moreover involving quite an interesting group of characters in its progress.

CHAPTER V.

A Revelation. History of the Spiritual Leader, Guysot, and of his Wife. Matilda's Story of Herself. The Society of Free-Lovers of New York; its Wicked Doings. How Husbands were estranged from their Wives, and Wives seduced from their Husbands. Sad History of a beautiful and accomplished Lady, from a Suburban Village, who fell a Victim to this Infernal Clique. Story of Edward Lawrence and his young Wife. A double Suicide. A Victim of Despair. Escape of a Libertine. Causes of Self-destruction.

NEVER did I draw a bell-knob with such a misgiving—such a feeling of goneness about the region of the heart, as I experienced in drawing the bell-knob of No. — ——— street, on the next evening, at a few minutes past nine o'clock. The bell-knob of a creditor's door has its horrors; that of a sweetheart's door has its palpitations; but the feelings I then experienced, were less enviable than either. I was treading on uncertain ground. I felt very much, at that time, as one feels when he is "sticking his nose into other folks' business" at the no little jeopardy of said nose's "continuity of structure." What if Mr. Guysot should open the door instead of my fair acquaintance? A most decided explanation might be necessary, or a most decidedly interesting scene might be witnessed, in which I would personally play a prominent part. I had not much time for melancholy forebodings, however, for the door opened and dispelled my fears. My fair acquaintance was paler

than on the previous evening; her countenance showed the effects of troublesome thought and watchfulness; her eyes were more languid, though they soon exhibited a nervous excitement indicating an unusual interest in something about to transpire.

After sitting in an easy chair by the fire a few moments, my companion occupying the sofa, and after much bracing myself to the task, I finally succeeded in broaching the subject that was uppermost in both our minds, in the following words, as near as may be:

"I understood you to say, the other evening, that you were acquainted with the wearer of this ring?"

"Yes," she somewhat hesitatingly replied, looking inquiringly in my face as she spoke. "But first tell me who you are, and what you know of this lady."

"Let us be confidants in this matter," I replied, seating myself on the sofa, and taking her soft, delicate hand in my own. "My name is ——, and I have lately seen this lady under very melancholy circumstances. Now reciprocate my confidence and you may depend, on the honor of a gentleman, that it shall be a confidence worthily and safely bestowed."

She turned her half-averted head, and I noticed the tears trickling down her cheeks.

"My name is Matilda De Long," she sobbed. "The lady who once wore that ring was Emily Lee. The letters on the inside of the ring are the initials of her uncle's name. But tell me, where is she? Though she was my rival—though the cause of much grief to me—I loved her. She was so kind, so pure. She was too good for this world. Tell me all. I fear the worst, for she disappeared suddenly, some six or seven weeks ago, when Mrs. Guysot came to the city, and nothing has been heard of her since;" and,—hesitating,—she continued,

"though no inquiries have been made. Mr. Guysot uses every precaution not to have a word said about her; for he don't want his associates to know any thing about the circumstances of her disappearance. He fears, also, of getting into the clutches of the law, for he was married to both these women. To the woman he now lives with, about two years ago, in Baltimore; to the owner of that ring, in Philadelphia, about six months ago.

"Mrs. Guysot's relations in Baltimore are among the richest and most influential of that aristocratic city; and Mrs. Guysot herself was considered one of the handsomest and most accomplished women of the Monumental City, distinguished for its handsome women. She loves her husband with a true woman's love, which his cold-heartedness smothers but can not extinguish.

"One day, Guysot, when he was in a very communicative mood, gave me a history of himself. I will relate it to you. He said he was the son of a New England farmer — a thrifty farmer; one who made farming profitable, by industry and economy, and by taking advantage of all the discoveries and improvements in agriculture. He was one of those farmers that view this calling as a science as well as an art. He took agricultural journals, and read all the standard works on this subject. He kept the best kinds of horses, and cows, and hogs. His orchards contained the best varieties of fruit. His fences and buildings were as they should be, and his implements were of the most improved patterns. He had the best tools and the best way for every farming operation, and he had a place for every tool and kept every tool in its place. He had a time for doing every kind of work, and a kind of work for every time. Farming was his business, his pleasure, his delight. He was happy in his calling.

He brought his children up to his own profession, except Charles, who seemed brighter than the rest; Charles was his mother's favorite; he was the third child. Charles was favored always; if Charles had any ailment—a headache, or a cold or what not—he need not work; he could lie around the house, and be stuffed with the good things by his mother. Charles did not like to work, and he often feigned sickness to get rid of it. When Charles had quarrels with his brothers and sisters, the mother always took his part, and screened him from punishment. The parents thought Charles would "make something;" that is, that he was too smart to be a farmer; so they concluded to make a lawyer or a doctor of him. They thought it would be a good idea to have one "ornament," at least, in the family. Charles was consequently kept at school from the time he was four or five years old till he was eighteen. By dint of coaxing, and hiring, and flattering, he made out to get through the village academy at eighteen, with a smattering of the branches there taught; but to the perfect satisfaction of his parents, who supposed there was no other such boy in the country. By his inactive life, and excesses with other fast young men, the "ornaments" of other families, he had acquired a feeble constitution. The family physician, an old fogy of a doctor, pronounced him "predisposed to consumption," and instead of recommending him to active out-door exercise and plain food, he said it was absolutely necessary to send young Charles to a warmer climate, which would most certainly restore him. Charles' mother had a cousin that was located in Baltimore as a physician. An arrangement was made to have Charles go to Baltimore to study medicine with this cousin; the thrifty New England farmer agreeing

to pay some three or four hundred dollars a year to defray his son's expenses, while being made a doctor, and eventually a professor (in the imagination of his parents). Charles made just such progress in medical attainments as all other pampered pets do under similar circumstances. He attended parties, and balls, and theaters, much more regularly than he did lectures. He studied the *modus operandi* (as he termed it) of brandy smashes and oyster stews, rather than that of calomel and ipecacuanha, and for the very good reason that they were more palatable subjects. He read ladies' books and trashy novels, much more than works on anatomy and practice. By paying for his tickets punctually, and advancing his money for his diploma, the college he attended made him an M. D., about three months after he was twenty-one. His father was now called on for funds to get his son into practice. He took an office, put his tin sign out, and was found there when he could find no other more attractive place. If his father expected to support him till he made enough by his practice to support himself, the indulgent old man might have made his calculations to support Charles for life.

Soon after putting out his sign of "Dr. Guysot," he paid a visit to the old homestead, and saw unmistakable symptoms of jealousy on the part of his brothers and sisters; they began to be dissatisfied with their parents' partiality for Charles. They thought, and had of late expressed, that thought audibly in the hearing of their parents, that they were just as good as Charles, and they did not think it right for them to stay at home and work all the year to earn money to keep Charles a gentleman. Although the old folks were as blinded as ever as to the great talents of their favorite son, and were disposed to

lavish money on him as freely as ever, yet the well-grounded complaints of the other children were becoming so frequent that a sense of justice obliged them to notice these complaints; and so they told Charles that he must now try to do something for himself, for the other children were becoming much dissatisfied.

Charles went back to Baltimore studying up some plan by which he might "do something for himself," a study which had never occupied his mind before. He could not think of working to accomplish this something; it must be brought about by some speculation or other; he thought of the lottery, and other kinds of gambling, but matrimony appeared the most feasible plan, for he was a young man of good common sense and would have made a talented and useful man, if he had been taught to rely more on his own exertions. He was about as good a man as he could have been with the chance he had. Before he reached Baltimore he resolved on hunting up some lady, young and handsome of course, if possible, but some lady *with money*. Good fortune sometimes favors the undeserving. Charles bethought him of a young lady with whom he had a slight acquaintance, that would do, Miss. Beaumont; although he had no real love for her he thought she would be bearable considering she was an only child, and her father was worth fifty or sixty thousand dollars. He resolved to undertake the conquest. It seemed the only chance for him.

Charles could make himself very agreeable if he wished; he had been in society enough to learn those little arts by which a woman's heart is captivated. He became a visitor at Mr. Beaumont's and won his daughter's affections. Mr. and Mrs. Beaumont, were not fashionable people; they were good common sense

people, who look more to substantial merit than to superficial acquirements; they were not long in forming an unfavorable opinion of Charles, and tried to dissuade their daughter from keeping his company.

This rendered Charles still more determined in the prosecution of his suit. He resolved now that he would have Agnes Beaumont at all hazards. He was really in earnest about it. Perhaps this was the first work he ever was very earnest about. He used all the acquirements and accomplishments he was possessed of to gain the confidence and love of Agnes, and he succeeded. He felt that he was safe now: when a man once gets the affections of a woman no power can rob him of the treasure. You may talk of the fickleness of our sex, but I tell you when a woman once really and truly loves she is not fickle, her heart is as constant as the magnet, pointing ever toward the object of its attraction. Mr. Beaumont considered it his duty to forbid Guysot his house. This only added fuel to the flame that glowed in Agnes' breast. Persecution is like the insufficient breath to extinguish a flame, it but increases it. Agnes had been raised as well as sensible parents in 'easy circumstances' could raise an only daughter. She had a good substantial education. Not so much pains had been taken to give her those light, frivolous accomplishments that are gained by lessons in fashionable dancing, fashionable music, and fashionable society. As a consequence, Agnes had a heart; she could feel, she could really love, which few fashionably raised ladies can do. She came to love Charles Guysot with all the fervor of her virgin nature. She was prepared to sacrifice every other endearment for him; so that when he proposed a secret correspondence and secret meetings, she consented.

Agnes loved her parents affectionately. No parents

could have wished for a more dutiful daughter. But the love she had for Guysot, was of that kind that bids us leave father and mother, how dear soever they may be to us, and cling to him who shall be bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh.

Agnes kept her intercourse with Charles a secret from her parents. As would be expected, she consented to a clandestine marriage. When a young woman takes the first step of disobedience, the next is more easily taken. Agnes stole from her father's house one Saturday night, after the family had retired, and went with Charles to New York, where they were married. He took her to his father's, where she created a very favorable impression; for, indeed, she was a good woman—too good for Charles. She wrote to her parents immediately after her marriage, imploring their forgiveness, etc., as is always done under such circumstances; the propriety of so doing being suggested by the author of her disobedience. At first Mr. Beaumont was not inclined to listen to his daughter's entreaties; he tried to harden his heart against her, and disown his daughter; but a mother's persuasions and tears prevailed, and the erring daughter was invited home with her husband, where they lived agreeably for a few weeks, while the novelty of the arrangement lasted. But this union, which was made, on Guysot's part, purely from pecuniary motives, without his heart being enlisted, soon lost its attractions to him. It is always so when a man marries a woman to get a home to live in without labor, he soon forgets to appreciate the living; he comes to consider it as something his wife owes him; and not unfrequently complains of the quality of the living. The situation became disagreeable to Guysot; he neglected what little business he had; he was frequently, almost nightly,

found at the restaurant's, billiard rooms, and other such places of resort. Agnes and her parents could not help but notice this neglect, but with a true woman's self-denial and love, she excused the indiscretions of her husband, as best she could; she treated him with the same affection as at first; but when she was alone, she poured out her grief in ineffectual tears.

My adopted parents were intimate with Mr. Beaumont's family. I was taken sick with a complaint peculiar to our sex.

I hardly know whether I ought to go on with my history. It may be improper and immodest to tell you all; but some influence seems to give me confidence in you. I feel that you will not abuse my confidence. I have been very wicked; I despise myself; I wish to reform. I want some friend to assist me; but I will not deceive a friend; I will tell you all—how lost I am. I shall not blame you if you reject my friendship; but if I am not beyond your sympathy, take pity on me, degraded as I am." The tears of true penitence flowed freely as she spoke these words.

I assured her of my sympathy and assistance, and would listen with confidential respect to whatever revelations she thought proper to make. Being thus assured, she went on, though with much hesitation and reluctance.

"Through Mr. Beaumont's recommendation Guysot attended me. He called to see me every day, although it seemed unnecessary, for my complaint did not confine me to my room. He appeared to manifest a great interest in my welfare; indeed, he so ingratiated himself into my feelings, that I became perfectly captivated—I was his slave. But I think I never should have listened to his criminal proposals if he had not

made them through professional advice. It is base, unutterably base, for any man to set himself about winning the confidence of a virtuous woman to seduce her; what words then can describe the baseness of the man who can use the garb of a profession, that should be sacred, to destroy his innocent victim! And yet, Guysot never appeared so base to me. I could not help loving him, notwithstanding all the injustice he did me.

After I recovered from my difficulty, our criminal intercourse continued, even when there was not the shadow of an excuse for it, so deluded and lost was I. I blush to acknowledge that I even consented to meet him at assignation houses. At one of these meetings a clerk of Mr. Beaumont's discovered us; he was nowise friendly to Guysot, indeed he would probably have been the husband of Agnes if she had not met Guysot. We expected we should be exposed. Oh! what sufferings I endured that night; the torments of hell can be no more intense. The horror of my situation broke suddenly on my soul. Oh, what peace I had sacrificed! In imagination, I saw every friend, every human being I met, looking on me with commiseration and contempt, and pointing the finger of scorn at my guilty heart. How could I escape these torments! I thought of self-destruction; but then, I had been taught that to die thus, my condition would be still worse. I slept none all night; early in the morning I received a written note—it was from Guysot: it read, 'Dear Matilda, I fear we shall be exposed. Had we not better leave this city? My situation at Mr. Beaumont's is becoming very disagreeable. It is with great reluctance he furnishes me with funds. By urgent solicitation, I have got three thousand dollars of him this morning. I think it is all I may expect to get of him. Will you accompany me

to New York? If so, meet me at E——'s this morning at eleven o'clock.' I hesitated not a moment; this seemed my only escape. I resolved to fly; and this attention of Guysot's bound me still more to him. I believed he really loved me more than any other being, as he often told me. And I still think he did at that time, before other circumstances and other fair ones came between us. I met him at E——'s; and that night, at midnight, he carried my trunk, containing my wardrobe, from the home that was dearest to me of any place on earth. I can not describe my feelings on leaving that home. Mr. and Mrs. Elliot had taken me while an infant from destitute parents, whom I supposed to be dead. They brought me up as their only child, and I believe they could not have loved me more if I had been their child. And I felt all the affection for them that a child could feel for its parents. Judge then what a shock it was to my feelings when I left that home so dear to me, and in such a clandestine manner, and for such a purpose. I never before knew what mental suffering was. I was a stranger to sorrow; I felt it now with all the intensity of an unscathed heart. But disgrace and infamy stared me from behind, and I fled as from a devouring flame. I felt then how guilty I had been, and Oh! how bitter was the punishment of that guilt! Oh, that mortals could know, and feel, and taste, the fruits of sin before they partake of it! The more enticing and fascinating the sin, the more excruciating its punishment.

We took apartments in New York, at a respectable boarding-house, as man and wife. We lived in this manner about six months.

Connections, formed as ours were, however fervent at first, grow cooler and colder, until frigid disgust is the only feeling. Connections, without virtue for their bond

of union, are of short duration. I think it impossible for two of opposite sexes to live happily together long, where they are living in sin. The constant consciousness of their guilt will eventually sour and change the most loving natures. It sinks them in each other's estimation, and if it does not terminate in absolute hatred, it will in coldness and loathing. It was thus with Guysot; he grew cold and negligent, so that I could but notice it; though I believe I loved him as fervently as ever. I had nothing else to love. The human heart must have an object to love; if it love not a worthy object, it will love an unworthy one.

One morning he left me saying he was going to Philadelphia on some business, and would be back in a week. I had noticed a coldness in his manner for a month previous, and he was absent almost every evening, although my simple heart would not harbor a doubt as to his love for me. I tried the more to please him, but my endeavors made no impression on his calloused heart. They seemed rather to produce disgust than respect for me.

He had become associated, while in New York, with that accursed sect of Free-Lovers. At first he went to the meetings of this sect out of curiosity; he took me with him. They were not pleasant to me. Though I was inexperienced in the wicked associations of men, my simple nature told me that there was something wrong in this avowed 'freedom of the affections,' my heart told me that woman was made to love but one of the opposite sex, and that it was wicked after she had bestowed her affections on that one, to endeavor to transfer them to another.

The few evenings that I attended their meetings, disgusted me with their practices. In those few even-

ings, I saw innocent and virtuous girls prostituted. I saw wives and mothers séduced by the vilest libertines. I could cite you to scores of such unhappy victims. They first were induced to attend these vile meetings out of curiosity. By frequently attending them, by tampering with the syren of licentiousness, they became fascinated. Step by step they descended the way of vice until they sank into the fathomless abyss of prostitution and misery. Oh what beautiful buds and flowers of womanhood have I seen blasted in this consuming fire. I have seen young girls, who at first were almost forced into these haunts, covering their blushing faces at their conscious impropriety, become so degraded as to advertise their unchasteness in the most public manner. I have seen wives that were brought to these dens by their husbands, merely to gratify their curiosity, not intending to go the second time: I have seen these heretofore chaste wives and affectionate mothers steal from their husband's home, from their lisping infants, to meet a debauchee at an infamous assignation house. I knew a beautiful young lady living in one of the rural villages, her family the most respectable, as to wealth and influence, brought to one of these meetings, while she was on a visit to some city acquaintances 'to see the sights:' she had read of them, and had a curiosity to attend one. She was treated with the most marked respect, as you may very well imagine, her talents and beauty were flattered, she was fascinated, she consented to attend the meetings again, with one of the leaders of the sect, without the knowledge of her acquaintances; she delayed her visit in the city, and finally, in less than two months after her first going to the Free-Love meeting, she was an inmate of a house of ill-fame. I knew a young wife, her husband was the most loving and

indulgent of husbands. He was the head clerk of a large mercantile house, receiving a salary that enabled him to live in good style. He surrounded his wife with all the comforts that money could obtain. He loved her most tenderly. He married her in the country to get a wife with a healthy body, and a *healthy heart.* They had been married nearly two years, and their tidy home, rendered more dear by the little babe that had blessed their union, was all that an earthly home could be. That fatal curiosity, that induced hundreds of others to go the first time to these Free-Love meetings, induced Edward Lawrence to go there. He had laid it down as a rule, and a very good rule it is, never to go where he was ashamed to take his wife. He took her. It was a fatal visit. Her beauty excited the passions of those brutal libertines for whose sensual gratification these meetings were established. One of them, an abandoned gambler, who had assumed a dozen of 'aliases' in as many months, who existed by getting the confidence, and then robbing unwary victims; but who was possessed of a very agreeable person and manners, resolved to possess, and ruin this young and virtuous wife. He obtained an introduction to Lawrence and his wife. He was very officious in showing them round the apartments, avoiding those that might be shown to the less virtuous. He was earnest in explaining the doctrines of the 'society.' And so eloquent was he, in setting forth its avowed principles of freedom, and justice, and natural religion, that the unsuspecting couple listened attentively and with pleasure, to the words of the destroyer. He made them promise to attend their meetings again; they did so, he was there to receive them and still farther ingratiated himself into their confidence. He was invited to their

house. Ah! little did they know what a serpent they were warming at their fireside. Mr. Lawrence's business called him from home from early in the morning, till late in the evening. This villain, well knowing that Lawrence was not in, called at mid-day to see him. He was invited in; with apparent reluctance he consented to enter the parlor; he inquired after the health of his new acquaintances. He sat and conversed alone with Mrs. L—— for a few moments with perfect propriety, and then took his leave. In a day or two he called again. He remained longer and was more animated in his conversation. He frequently called in the evening while Mr. Lawrence was in, so as to fully establish himself in his confidence. His day visits at Mr. L——'s became more frequent and more protracted; he came at a certain hour. Mrs. L—— opened the door, instead of the servant girl.

One day, a dark day, a fatal day in her history and her husband's history, fatal to her peace and her husband's peace, she cautiously stole from her happy home. A blush was on her cheek; she looked down as she passed along the street and drew the vail closer over her face. As she entered a house standing back from the street, she cautiously and fearfully glanced around her, as though she feared some one were watching her. A few moments after she entered the house their confidential friend followed. She was lost,—lost to virtue,—to honor,—to peace, forever!

Her assignations with this deceiver became more frequent. Her husband noticed a change in her demeanor toward him. He ascribed it to her not being well. He could not harbor a more unfavorable thought. Oh that this confidence in his wife could ever have remained! A clerk in the same establishment

with himself, who was rather dissipated in his habits, and who envied young Lawrence his superior situation, which his worth had obtained for him, discovered Mrs. L—— at the assignation house in company with her paramour. He burned to tell the husband, and to glory in his discomfiture and mortification. Often had they talked of virtue, he maintaining that all females were alike inconstant, and Lawrence upholding their honor. He sought an opportunity to let this secret out, and thus wound the feelings of his best friend. Early one morning, and he came thus early, for the express purpose of meeting Lawrence alone, he introduced the subject of female virtue rather abruptly, insisting that there was no virtuous woman. 'I believe I have a wife that is virtuous,' Lawrence replied with animation. 'What'll you bet of that?' the dissolute clerk eagerly asked. 'I don't want you to repeat such a banter again, sir,' Lawrence replied with anger; 'I don't want you to insult me again, sir, in that manner. I will overlook it this time, and I think we had better not talk on this subject again.' 'I know what I'm about, Lawrence: I was in earnest in making that banter.' Lawrence grasped the clerk by the throat and knocked him down. A couple of the other clerks coming in at this time, were no little astonished at finding Lawrence beating the prostrated man. They drew him off, inquiring, 'What is the matter?' 'He has insulted my wife,' Lawrence gasped, his mouth foaming with rage. The clerk slowly got himself to his feet, vowing vengeance against Lawrence. 'I'll show you whether I've insulted your wife; I'll show every one in this house, and I'll show every one in the city, whether I've insulted your wife, you d—d cuckold, you.' Lawrence would have knocked the clerk down again if he had not been prevented by

the employees of the establishment, who had collected to witness this unusual scene. The senior member of the firm came in at this time and was no less astonished than the rest at what he saw. 'Lawrence struck me,' the clerk said, wiping the blood from his nose, 'because I was going to tell him something privately, of what I had seen of his family; but now he shall hear of it from every body and from every newspaper in the city.' The clerk was about telling what he had hinted at, but the proprietor remonstrated with him and prevailed on Lawrence going into the counting-room and listening calmly to what the clerk had to say. To this arrangement the clerk was rather reluctant, for he feared another castigation. A deep groan was heard soon after from the counting-room, and the clerk rushed out crying 'Help! help!' Lawrence had fallen insensible on the floor. The nearest physician was sent for, who soon restored him to consciousness, and by a powerful effort he became perfectly calm. After sitting silent a few moments, he approached the clerk, and taking his hand asked his forgiveness before all of them present, and then taking him aside spoke a few words to him. He asked of the proprietor that they might be excused a few hours.

That day Lawrence saw his wife at a house of prostitution in company with her seducer. That night a pistol report was heard in one of the by-streets, and a watchman hurrying to the spot, saw a man in the last agonies of death; his brain spattered over the pavement. The watchman, in trying to identify the suicide, found his linen marked 'Lawrence.' The next morning, Lawrence's wife was found dead in her bed—her child drawing at her cold breast. A large vial labeled 'laudanum,' was lying on the floor. This

story was related to me by a lady who had adopted the child of this ill-fated pair as her own. I could relate scores of such instances to you, where the young and chaste, the beautiful, the intelligent, affectionate wives and husbands have been seduced from the path of virtue, and plunged over the abyss of infamy and destruction.

Guysot became intimately associated with this accursed sect of Free-Lovers—enemies to all that is pure and virtuous. His time was taken up wholly with their meetings, their plans, their heartless plots; and I have reason to believe that he will have to answer at the bar of God for the destruction of many an innocent being. Whatever there was of honor in his soul was destroyed by his association with these emissaries of the Evil One.

At the time Guysot left me for Philadelphia, I was conscious of being *enceinte*. The singular feelings attending this condition, still further operated to depress my spirits. I longed for some kind heart to support me in this new and trying situation. Never did days and nights pass so drearily. Evil forebodings haunted me by day—horrid dreams made me dread sleep at night; but the anticipation of his return was a bright star of hope which shed its heavenly light over my gloominess. I counted the days and the hours with miserly exactness; and when the day arrived for his return, it seemed the morning of a millennium. The day passed without bringing him. I watched all night, my heart palpitating at every footstep on the street. Often was I sure that I heard his, and rushed to the door to welcome him; but he came not. And thus I watched, day after day, and night after night, till my wearied nature was sick and exhausted.

Much has been said of 'hope deferred;' but no lan-

guage can describe that sickening of the heart, that utter prostration that comes over the soul, when it is repeatedly disappointed in some fond hope; that giving up, that abandonment of every pleasurable expectation, that relapse and sinking of the life-spirits, as the miserable being turns, with countenance dissolved in despair, from the altar of the heart's hopes; and yet, the heart revives from this relapse, revives and revives again, until the despairing one is scarcely conscious of the pulsations of hope. Thus did I hope and hope, until exhausted, I would sink in despair, and then hope would revive again. But my spirits were wearing continually; each re-action was weaker and weaker; oh, what misery I endured! How often did those words ring in my ears: 'The way of the transgressor is hard.' Oh, that I had never sinned, to be thus seared to the very soul with the iron of retribution! But it is just! God has affixed punishments to all transgressions. When we sin we know we shall be punished. But, I have thought sometimes that my punishment was more than I deserved. May God forgive me for such thoughts, for I have been tortured, seemingly, to the extreme of human endurance.

At the end of another week I was still watching for him. I could not believe that he would leave me thus, although I noticed whisperings among the boarders and smiling glances, as much as to say, 'There is something not right.' A few kind faces looked on me with an expression of pity. While standing at the parlor window, one Sunday morning, watching the street with swollen and weary eyes, a gentleman passed with whom I was acquainted. I was aware of his having gone to Philadelphia, about three weeks before, and he was now on his return home. The thought struck me that he might

have seen Guysot in Philadelphia. I flew to the door and called him back—

'Have you seen Mr. Guysot lately?' I asked. He dropped his eyes on the pavement, marking it thoughtlessly with his toe. He stammered, appeared confused, and at a loss what to say. 'Why don't you speak? what is the matter? tell me, quick!'

'I have not time, now,' he replied, 'but will send you a note as soon as I reach my boarding-house and tell you all about it. My baggage is going yonder on that express, and I must hasten on to attend to it.'

With difficulty I reached my room. The awful truth seemed half unfolded to my view, but still I hoped. Woman's heart believes not the inconstancy of her lover till the conviction is forced upon her. I sat rocking spasmodically before the fire, when I heard the door-bell ring; it seemed the knell of my heart's death, for poniard could not have stopped its beatings more suddenly. Footsteps ascended the stairs and stopped at my door; a gentle tap and the landlady entered and handed me a letter. She said not a word, but retired. With the intensest excitement of my whole being I tore open the envelope, and read, first the signature—it was from the acquaintance I had just seen. The first sentence revealed the whole:

'I fear, Matilda, you have been deceived. I feel it my duty to tell you the truth. It can be no worse to endure than the tortures of suspense and anxiety that you must now suffer. I saw Mr. Guysot twelve days ago. I saw him married to a young lady of this city, a Miss Lee. The morning after, they were to start for Cincinnati.

'Yours truly,

'GEORGE.'

I thought that I had already endured all that the human heart could bear; but this was a pang keener, more excruciating than all. O God, may I never again pass through such an ordeal of mental agony!

Two weeks from that Sunday morning I was able to sit up again in a bolstered rocking-chair. I had been insensible during the most of the intervening time. My brain seemed to have been paralyzed by some dreadful stroke. I could hardly believe but that it was but yesterday I had received the letter from George. I noticed that my waist was much smaller than before, and that a bandage was pinned around me; it was with pain I attempted to walk. I felt calm; the furious storm had so shocked my whole system as to leave it in a dreamy, half-unconscious condition, reckless of what should now happen me. Affliction had done its worst.

I recovered my strength rapidly, so that in two weeks I could walk out. The question now was: What was I to do? I could not return to my adopted parents in Baltimore, although they would, no doubt, receive me kindly, and look over my erring; for they loved me as their own child. After I had left them they advertised for me, offering every inducement and persuasion for me to return. The sight of their pious and parental faces would scorch my very soul with shame; and the scorn and contempt with which I would be met by my former gay associates! I could not bear the thought. I would rather die. The faint hope flitted before my mind that he might not be false—that some syren might have thrown her spells around him, and that he might yet return to me, when freed from her resistless fascinations; so ready is woman's forgiving heart to put a favorable construction on the actions of him whom she loves; so unwilling is she to believe aught injurious to

his character. I resolved to find him—to go to Cincinnati. I sold some jewels and a gold watch, thus obtaining about one hundred and fifty dollars. I paid my bill at the boarding-house, and with the balance started for this city.

When I arrived here, I put up at a private boarding-house; for I sought retirement. The light talk and laughter of the crowd was jarring to my ear. My room was on the second story, fronting the most fashionable promenade of the city (the north side of Fourth street). There I sat from day to day, watching, with unwearied eye, through a crevice made by the blinds of my window being slightly ajar, the stream of human life that flowed unceasingly along that main artery of the Queen City. Many of the countenances became familiar to me from seeing them pass and repass so often. It would have been a fine situation to study the traits of human nature—its beauties, its deformities, its stimuli, its vanities, its follies—if I had been in a philosophic mood; but other and dearer than philosophic investigations occupied my mind.

I began to despair of seeing the object I was in search of. I was nearly convinced he was not in Cincinnati; but one morning, while sitting at my post, almost ready to give up my fruitless search, I saw him. I recognized him at the first glance; I could not be deceived. He was passing slowly along, not with that brisk step of the business man, but with the easy step of a man of leisure; and, oh! my worst fears were realized! A beautiful lady, the wearer of that ring, was leaning gently on his arm, seemingly absorbed in the words he was speaking to her. I staggered to a lounge and fell on it, where I lay, in a half-crazy, half-insensible condition, for I know not how long, from

which I was aroused by the landlady entering the room and inquiring, with an alarmed expression, 'What is the matter?'

'Oh! nothing, nothing much,' I replied, trying to appear calm.

'But there is something the matter with you,' she continued, and she spoke so kindly and encouragingly that I fell on her neck, weeping, and revealed all to her. She promised to assist me in every way she could.

The next day I saw him pass again, but he was alone. I ran to the landlady and pointed him out to her from the door. She drew on a bonnet, threw a shawl loosely over her shoulders, and hastened after him. Touching him lightly on the shoulder, she told him there was a person, a few doors back, on the opposite side of the street, who wished to speak to him. He seemed alarmed, but followed her to my room. I shall not tell you what happened there. Suffice it to say, I consented to live with him as his servant, unrecognized by any other relation. It was a terrible humiliation. But what will not woman submit to that will enable her to be near the object of her love?

Guysot tried to excuse his wicked abandonment of me, although his guilty countenance showed that he uttered a falsehood, by saying that he met Emily at the society of Free-Lovers, and that she so threw around him the attractions of her sex, that he was seduced to improper conduct, and then she insisted on his marrying her to save her from infamy. I don't know whether I believed this or not, but I still loved Guysot, unworthily as he had treated me. What other object was I to love? The affections must have some object to twine around. I should have loved him, though he had treated me never so inhumanly. And oh what thoughts,

think you, occupied my mind (before taking upon myself this severest trial of living as a menial with the man who had so shamefully abandoned me, and being continually goaded with the consciousness of another being the recipient of those affections, I had madly flattered myself were mine) when I thought of what I had consented to do? The entering into that duty seemed like the entering a tomb, cold, gloomy unnatural, full of dark forebodings and death, not of the body, but of the feelings, the heart, the soul, death of the glorious ethereal part of our nature. All day and all night was this one gloomy thought before my imagination. I brooded over it till life became a heavier burden than ever. I was several times on the point of going back to my adopted parents, so naturally does the heart revert to where we have been happy, believing that we can be happy there again. But no sooner was this pleasant anticipation in my mind, than the dark image of my sin would cover it as with a dark cloud, and then, despair would take possession of my soul, and more than once was I almost prepared for self destruction. Oh, if I could have believed I would go to a better world, this hand would have put an end to my miserable existence. While in one of my gloomy moods (the day was dark and gloomy too), a funeral procession passed my window. I saw the coffin through the glass side of the hearse. Oh! how I wished that I had been in that coffin in virtuous death. Those that scoff at the suicide, and think him silly, know not what they do. They know not of the unutterable, insupportable anguish, that gnaws at the human soul; of the torturing crucifixion it endures; of the agony indescribable it suffers for days and nights continually, until every moment is full of torture, before the haunted victim approaches the brink of self destruction.

The human mind can get in that condition, that life is a burden, that every moment is full of misery; when the miserable being longs for night, that he may banish for a few hours this vulture from his soul. Sleep is his only solace. He dreads the light of morning, as it is the harbinger of another day of suffering. I can easily conceive how a human being can get in that deplorable condition, as to fly to self destruction is a relief. I have felt the terrors of that condition, and whenever I read of a suicide, I pity the unfortunate victim. I can imagine what insupportable torment the soul must have endured to drive the being to this extremity. Oh, pity the suicide, for you may some day feel the terrors of his situation!

At the end of a week Guysot had made arrangements for keeping house, where we now live, I acting in the capacity of chambermaid. I found the companion of his walk—the young lady of the ring, his third victim—to be an amiable and virtuous creature, who loved her false husband truly, and who had not the least suspicion of his villainy. Guysot had received about three thousand dollars in cash from his first wife, and about five thousand dollars from Emily. This enabled him to make a fine appearance, and to introduce himself into what is called the 'first circles of society,' that is, the moneyed circles."

CHAPTER VI.

Singular and Romantic History of Emily Lee, the beautiful Corpse and of her Parents and Uncle. How she became the Spiritualist's Wife. Meeting of the Spiritualist's two Wives. Continuation of Matilda's Narrative. Her meeting with Guysot's first Wife; her Repentance. A Spiritual Bed-chamber. Affecting Scene. Plan for breaking up the Orgies of the Spiritual Free-Lovers.

"As I became acquainted with Emily I ceased to harbor a jealous feeling toward her. I would not have caused her pain for the world. I studiously avoided giving her a hint of the past life of *her husband*. I loved her as a sister, and on her account, I resisted the frequent advances of Guysot to continue our criminal intercourse. Emily was an English girl who had been accompanying an invalid uncle on a tour through the United States for the benefit of his health. He died in New York. Emily was waiting for the next steamer to return home, when an evil star led her into the acquaintanceship of Guysot.

One day when Emily and I were sitting alone by the fire, she told me her whole history. Her mother was the daughter of an English gentleman of wealth, a Mr. Gordon; he had but two children, Julia and Alfred; he lived in the suburbs of London, in a perfect paradise of a country residence. The house was not too large nor too small, just right for comfort, and it was hidden almost in its lawns of thick shrubbery. Mr. Gordon took great delight in horticulture and gardening. He studied it as a science, and the most of his time was occupied in attending to his large orchards, filled with every variety of fruit; his greenhouse; his gardens; in the reading of books and periodicals on these subjects;

in congenial meetings with fellow-amateurs. Nothing gave him greater pleasure than to show persons through his extensive and beautiful grounds. He would become animated and eloquent in describing the choice specimens of his brilliant collection. So ardent was he in his favorite pursuit, that he would not employ a gardener, even in the humblest department, unless he was thoroughly versed in his profession.

He had long sought for a man as enthusiastic and skilled as himself for an overseer of his treasures. One day, a young man came through the recommendation of an acquaintance, and applied for the situation. His youthful appearance produced an unfavorable first impression, but he came so highly recommended from one whom Mr. Gordon knew to be well qualified to judge, that he took him on trial; his name was Leonard Lee; he soon became a favorite with his employer, and well he might, for he was a young man of genius and talent. He had a good education, and he was all that a noble heart could make a man. He was handsome too. If he had possessed the trappings of wealth, his society would have been courted by the first of the land. But he was poor! He was a diamond destined to waste its brilliance in the unpolished soil. Leonard became a favorite with all the family, and in fact, with every one with whom he was acquainted. There was one who came to have a more than ordinary friendship for him, said Emily, with downcast eye. My mother loved him, loved him with all the fervor of a woman's heart. But he never encouraged this love; he treated her with that respect becoming an English employee to his employer's family.

He did not, or appeared not to, notice the frequent expressions of love which my mother could not repress.

But there was a tenderness in the eye, a softness in the speech; there was a blush on the cheek, an expression of pleasure when she was in his presence that he could not have misunderstood. She was most happy when she was with him, and she had frequent errands, some of them very trifling, that brought her to him; and she lingered with him, as if unwilling to depart. At last he awoke to the consciousness of being loved by her; but oh, what madness to think of it! His noble soul would not trifle with her affections. He resolved to flee from her, for fear he might forget his position and abuse the confidence of his employer; for fear he might dare to return that love. Return it! It was returned! His heart loved her already, deeply, wholly; but dared not confess it. Alfred also loved Leonard, as though he had been his own brother. One day, as my mother ran down the vineyard to ask Leonard about some trifling affair, he told her he must bid her good-by, as he was going to leave that afternoon. Never before had he such a trial to go through. It was like reading his death warrant to tell her this. He said it—and the tears coursing down his agonized face, showed how painful this parting was. She no longer restrained her feelings, but fell on his neck, weeping. 'Oh don't, don't leave me,' she sobbed, 'you will kill me.' His arm unconsciously supported her trembling form, and at this unfortunate moment Mr. Gordon came directly upon them. To say that he was astonished, and then enraged, would faintly express the feelings of the full-blooded Englishman, whose ideas of caste were so inveterate. However much he respected young Lee as an intelligent horticulturist, his hereditary prejudices could not allow him in the same social position as himself. If Leonard had been the most talented young man in England the

circumstance of his belonging to the producing class would effectually bar him from the inner society of Mr. Gordon. He would have attempted personal violence on the young man, but my mother clasped her father's knees, crying, 'It is my fault, it is my fault, oh, I love him, Father; I can not help it. He told me he was going to leave, just because I love him. Oh! Father let him stay, let me love him.' 'Go to the house, you imprudent girl,' her father said; taking her firmly by the arm, and starting her on the way. 'And you, sir,' he said, returning, and hardly able to speak from rage, 'leave me immediately.' The young man tried to speak. 'Say not a word, here is your pay, take your things and leave immediately, and never let me see you on my premises.'

When Leonard had passed the bounds of his employer he went into a secluded spot covered with thick foliage and there he gave vent to his feelings in tears; he wept, his very soul wept with grief. When he had become calmed, he prayed to God to forgive him the wrong he had unwittingly done. While he was pleading in earnest prayer, his very soul flying upward through his heaven-directed eyes, he heard quick steps approaching. He turned, and my mother was in his arms. 'I can not, I will not, leave you Leonard; I would rather die. Let me go with you. I can not live without you. Come, Leonard, do let me go, we can make a living. I will work. Oh, what joy it will be to work with you! Come, don't refuse me, dear Leonard.' He tried to remonstrate with her, but she would not listen. He was forced, as it were, to consent. And they went away together. They settled near a distant seaport, and there they were united as one flesh. Never was a spirit union more happy than theirs.

He obtained a similar situation to the one he left,

and they lived happily in their neat little whitewashed cottage. There I was born. Fifteen years they had lived in this situation. My mother had written to her father, but he had never answered her. Once her brother had sent a letter inclosing fifty pounds, which he had been saving a long time to send to his sister. He wrote without his father's knowledge, for he said his father had threatened to drive him from his door if ever he spoke of his sister. I was fourteen years old. One day my father went to town for some tropical shrubs, which had just arrived for his employer, from the West Indies. The vessel had not yet been unloaded, and my father went on deck to get the shrubs. While he was waiting to see the mate, he heard a low moan proceeding from under an old sail, laid over a couple of poles. He approached nearer, and saw beneath the awning a man lying apparently in the last agonies of death. His lips were dry, and parched, and cracked; his mouth was open, and at times his tongue would slowly protrude; it was dry and parched as a piece of leather, grating as it passed over the teeth; his teeth were covered with a dark crust; his nostrils compressed, his eyes set. At long intervals the lids would slowly move. His cheeks were sunken and of a ghastly yellow color; his brow suffused with a cold clammy sweat, as were his arms and hands, which would twitch frequently and pick at the dirty counterpane that covered him. The man breathed heavily through his mouth, often snoring; once in a while he would start, and his dim eyes would look around with an intelligent expression. At one of these startings he fixed his eyes on my father. He gazed intently, and tried to speak; but a faint movement of his dry tongue and throat, and a stronger breath than usual, was all that he could do; and his eyes

became set again. As my father stood there, the captain approached him and with a gentle touch on the shoulder said: 'That man is pretty sick, sir; we would like to get some one to take care of him. We all are so busy unloading and loading our ship, that we shall have no time to attend to him. Have you not a house, sir, and a family?' 'Yes,' my father replied. 'Would you not like to take him? you will be well paid for it, for that man is a rich West India planter, and he has thousands of pounds with him. I shall deposit his money with a public officer here, and he will be authorized to pay well for taking care of the man, if he should die; but if he lives, you will make your fortune, I assure you; for he is noted for his benevolence, and he has no heirs, so that who knows but he might make you his heir, if you should save his life.' The captain led my father away from the man, as he talked. He appeared very anxious to get the sick man off his hands. My father said, 'he would ask his wife when he went home, and if she consented, he would return with a suitable conveyance and get the man; but in the meantime, if the captain could get another person to take care of him he would much prefer it.' Toward evening my father had nearly reached home with the invalid in an easy springed wagon filled with straw, and a feather bed, and comforts, and the baggage of the stranger, when it occurred to my father that, in the hurry and excitement of getting the man off, he had forgotten to ask his name. He had not much chance to inquire of the ship's crew, however; they shunned the sick man and my father, as they would a pestilence. Cool, fresh air, a clean room, fresh water, suitable nourishment and good nursing worked wonderful effects on the sick man; so that on the second evening he fell

into a sound sleep, and a warm moisture broke out over his whole body, and his tongue and lips became moist. He had not spoken as yet, nor shown signs of intelligence as to his situation. Having been kept awake the night before, we all slept soundly that night. The sun had risen before we awoke, when my father jumped up alarmed, that we had neglected the sick man thus. With a trembling heart he opened the door where the stranger lay, fearing to find him dead. But oh! what an agreeable surprise awaited him, as the stranger's eye met his and ours; for we all stood behind our father, anxious to know the result. I could not have believed that one short night could have wrought such a change in the human countenance; we could scarcely believe that the breathing corpse of the previous evening lay before us an intelligent being. His eye met my mothers; it dilated, he gazed on her with the most singular expression I ever beheld. I never shall forget that look of the stranger as he beheld my mother. His lips moved, and 'Julia' faintly proceeded from them. 'Oh Alfred, my brother! my brother!' and my mother fell in a paroxysm of joy at his bed-side, her face weeping in his bosom. I will not attempt to describe the scene that quickly followed;—of the joy we all felt at so miraculous a meeting. He was soon able to tell us his history for the last fifteen years. He was persuaded by his father to go to the West Indies three years after my mother left, to banish from his mind the thoughts of his persecuted sister; for he was continually bringing her to his father's notice. He could not help it, for his thoughts were ever on her. He was successful in business in the West Indies; he accumulated property, and beside, about six months previously he had married the sole heiress of a rich sugar planter. They had not been

married but four months when the yellow fever broke out, and his young wife, to whom he was devotedly attached, fell a victim, and he came near dying also. As soon as he was able to be moved, he was carried to a ship, being resolved to flee the country, and if he lived to go back to England, spend the rest of his days in the society of his sister, for he was now willing to be disinherited by his father to enjoy the cherished society of his beloved sister.

He improved somewhat on the sea; but just before the ship arrived in England, he took a relapse, in which condition my father found him. He recovered rapidly. But alas! I must tell you, though it opens those cruel wounds by which my young heart was torn—my parents took that fatal fever from my uncle. Need I tell you of the long hours of suffering they endured, those hours of bitter agony! I will spare you this sad recital. They died—and here Emily sobbed as though her very heart would break, at a recollection so painful. They were buried. My uncle was fully conscious of being the cause of their death; the thought tormented him day and night. He would start up in his sleep and scream, 'I did not kill them; no, no no; I did not kill them:' his face would be bathed in big drops of agony; and then he would sink exhausted from the terrible excitement. His physician began to despair of his recovery. He gave it as his opinion, that unless my uncle's mind could be diverted from this torturing thought he would become entirely deranged. It was proposed to send word to his father, hoping that his father's presence might have a beneficial influence. My grandfather had not as yet heard of his son's arrival, nor of his daughter's death. Just as a messenger was being sent on this errand, a letter arrived for my uncle,

which contained intelligence in reference to his affairs in Jamaica, that determined him to go there immediately. He departed on the next steamer; I accompanied him. We remained in Jamaica three years. His health continued poor: his physicians advised him to go to the United States. Accordingly he arranged his business and departed. We spent a year traveling in Mexico and in this country. But my uncle continued very feeble. The one gloomy thought, of being the cause of his sister's death,—of making me an orphan, ever haunted him. He never could forget it. It wore on him continually. He had received several letters from his father, exhorting him to return home and bring his orphaned grandchild. Self crimination seized the conscience of my grandfather, when he heard of the death of my parents. The cruelty of his treatment to my mother flashed on his mind then with all its bitter accusations. He frequently said, in his letters, Oh, could I have seen my cruelty, before it was too late to atone for it! I would give all my earthly possessions, if I could spend one hour with my dear Julia in imploring her forgiveness! but I can not, I can not. I must drag this chain of misery to my grave. Ay, and beyond the grave. I feel that I shall suffer for such unnatural treatment of my child forever—forever.

We were waiting in New York for a steamer to go to Liverpool, on our way to my grandfather's; for my uncle had resolved to go there to die. A fixed melancholy had settled down on him, and he frequently spoke of his death being near at hand, with the calmness of a traveler speaking of the end of his journey. While we were at New York my uncle was taken worse. Accident threw Mr. Guysot in our society, and my uncle employed him as his physician. He was very attentive.

His visits were always agreeable, he seemed to manifest such an interest in our welfare. I told him my whole history, and he appeared to sympathize deeply with me in my affliction; offering to do any thing in his power to assist and comfort me. My uncle improved somewhat under his treatment. But one evening, soon after taking a dose of a new kind of medicine, he suddenly grew worse, and continued to sink; he died before morning. If my condition was lonely before, how utterly desolate was I now; deprived of my only object of affection on earth. Mr. Guysot, or 'Doctor' Guysot, as we usually called him, paid me the most marked attention after my uncle's death. He called on me frequently, and comforted me all he could. He seemed the only friend I had left. No wonder then, when he offered to become my friend and protector for life, that I did not refuse his offer. I gave up my plan of going to my grandfather's, for a while, and we concluded, at Mr. Guysot's request, to live for the present in Cincinnati. He said that he had associations in New York, that he wished to break away from, when he married; for he wished to have but one object on which to place his affections." Matilda, with a moisture suffusing her eyes, here said, that she never underwent such a struggle to suppress her feelings, as when Emily was thus innocently stabbing her very soul. "But there is one thing," continued Emily, after hesitating a moment; "but you must never hint a word of it to a living being, if I tell you:" I promised her I would not. "My uncle willed me all his property before he died. I have the will in my possession. I have not told my husband of this, for I did not wish him to think I was rich. I did not wish him to marry me unless he could love me without riches." And here she ended her history, "our con-

versation turning on other topics. Emily said that she thus made a confidant of me, because I seemed like a sister to her. She said she really loved me, and I know that she never spoke an untruth. Oh! Emily was a being too good for this vile world. I felt that I was in the presence of a superior being when with her. Nothing but purity ever found harbor in her chaste breast. She was all that a virtuous woman could be on earth. There are beings, though but seldom met with, who seem to be advanced beyond this existence, seeming to have commenced their immortality on earth. We love them with a holy reverence, conscious of their superiority. Such a love I had for Emily. Many a night have I laid in my sleepless bed thinking of her, of our singular and untruthful way of living, asking myself if I were doing right in thus keeping her ignorant of the deceptive peace in which she slumbered. But I would not pain her; I would not crush her dearest hopes. I would not torture her sensitive soul; and so I let her alone in her blissful dreams. How suddenly and how frightfully was she awakened! How scathing was that soul-piercing bolt that shattered her spirit, as relentlessly as the shock of Heaven destroys its doomed victim. I knew her spirit could not survive such a shock. Death! death would have been a relief. She would have invoked Death to spare her this agony, this torture of the spirit, whose intensity can not be measured by bodily suffering! I can faintly imagine how her feeling soul was pierced, when she saw how she had been deceived. Oh, God, have pity on her! Receive her to thee, where her angelic nature can find its fitting and eternal home!

After sitting in silence a moment Matilda continued:

"Our house has become the rendezvous of a society

of Spiritual Free-Lovers, or more properly, Infernal Free-Lovers. I blush to think of the scenes of violated virtue, of conjugal infidelity, that I have witnessed during the short period these enemies of chastity have congregated here. I have sometimes thought it my duty to make these disgraceful scenes public, and thus break up such infernal orgies; but I lack the resolution. I need some stouter heart than mine to support me in such an undertaking." (The cathedral bell is just striking half past ten, and I must hasten on with my story, for I am burning with anxiety to learn the fate of my dear Emily, which you must tell me in return for the truthful confession I am now making.)

"I will tell you all," I replied, with a heavy heart; "but go on and let me hear the rest of this strange history."

"Sometime in the commencement of winter," she continued, "Mr. Guysot and Emily went to hear the English opera troupe in the 'Bohemian Girl.' Returning home, while passing the brilliant window of a drug-store on —— street, a female who had been following them from the theater, fell on Guysot's neck and shrieked, 'My husband! my husband!'

'Is she mad? She frightens me! Who is she? Do you know her?' asked Emily, in quick and agitated accents.

'Mad! no, I am not mad! He is my husband, and you, cruel woman, have stolen him from me. Speak, Charles, and tell her that you are my husband! Tell her to leave us and torment this broken heart no more!'

He spoke not, but stood like an inanimate thing while the strange female still hung on his neck. Emily, pale, speechless, racked in mental agony, stood like a marble statue, transfixed to the spot. The fatal truth seemed bursting on her heretofore unsuspicious soul. Sum-

moning all her fortitude to the trying task, with horror and despair depicted in her countenance, she stammered forth, directing her penetrating gaze on Guysot, 'Speaks she the truth?'

'Tell her, Charles, tell her, dear husband,' quickly cried the mysterious female.

'She does,' he slowly answered.

This was enough. Poor Emily staggered forward and would have fallen, had she not been caught by one of the bystanders (for quite a group had collected around the party). Emily was carried into the drugstore, where, by the application of the proper stimuli, she revived. Guysot and the female whom he had just acknowledged as his wife (Mrs. G., with whom he is now living), left, promising to be back in a few minutes with a carriage. He took her to the hotel where she was stopping, and undoubtedly made some arrangement with her to hush up the matter, without having it become public, and then hastened back with a carriage for Emily. The druggist told him that he had scarcely left the store when Emily arose, and adjusted her garments, saying that she was quite well and able to go. She thanked her attendants and went out. They said she appeared perfectly calm, and walked with a firm step down Main street toward the river.

A dark thought struck Guysot as he heard 'toward the river.' He started with a shudder—he flew from the store and ran to the levee; but saw nothing of the object of his search. Even *his* heart then felt the pangs of remorse, which whispered to his soul, 'Thou art her murderer!' He came home—she was not here. He told me what had happened, and told me his fears, that she would kill herself or expose him, hardly knowing which to dread most.

I retired to my room, though not to sleep. The innocent and beautiful Emily haunted my mind that night. I almost blamed myself that I had concealed the character of her false husband from her. I heard Guysot walking the room at intervals during the night. He would go out on the street occasionally, and be gone for half an hour at a time. Once he was gone over two hours. He must have endured the torments of hell that night: for what hell can be worse than the tortures of self-crimination? It is a hell that admits of no escape. It is a hell that one carries in his own bosom.

Day after day passed without bringing any tidings of Emily. Guysot finally concluded, or tried to make himself believe, that Emily had returned to England. The jewelry that she wore would afford abundant means to pay her passage. In two or three weeks after the disappearance of Emily, he brought his first wife here, and matters have gone on as agreeably as could have been expected under such unnatural and wicked circumstances. Guysot trumped up a story about his being led astray by the fair Emily, which his credulous wife, woman-like, believes. And he seems rather well satisfied that affairs have taken so favorable a turn, thus screening him from public indignation, or even from the prison's bars.

You may well believe that it was mortifying to me to meet Guysot's first wife. I would have sunk from her presence in utter humiliation. I could not rest till I found an opportunity to fall at her feet, and in tears and honest contrition of heart, beg her forgiveness. Oh! that open confession, that laying out of my heart before her, that torrent of tears were a relief to me, and still greater—her frank and full forgiveness. Ay, and her blessing on my wicked and undeserving head. What

a shrine of love is a true woman's breast! How next to our Saviour's is its forgiving spirit. I felt relieved. I thanked her in a paroxysm of joy. If the punishment of my sins had been great, the joy I experienced from her forgiveness seemed to cancel it all. Oh! had I known before I sinned, of sin's bitter consequences; of the injury irreparable I should inflict on a noble woman, I never had sinned. Mrs. Guysot told me that she had by accident learned her husband was in New York. She resolved to go there, although her friends tried in every way to prevent her. She learned at our boarding-house that Guysot had gone to Cincinnati. She came here, not hesitating a moment to think of consequences, so blind is woman to all consequences when in the pursuit of the object of her love. What a powerful all-absorbing, holy love is hers! Oh! how cruel to trifle with that love; woman is all love, it is her province, her being, her hope, her soul; when she bestows this, she gives her all.

Mrs. Guysot is surrounded here with unpleasant circumstances, but she endures all, for she is with her husband.

I have become disgusted with this way of living, and am anxious to abandon it. But my conscience tells me I have a duty to perform first. To the orgies of these Spiritual Free-Lovers, who profess to meet here for holy purposes, come beautiful, and as yet, virtuous females, who are doomed to be the victims of these human monsters, congregated here as serpents to sunny places, to fascinate and destroy their prey. It seems my duty to warn these innocent beings of the cruel fate impending over them. And, although it will bring the indignation of the whole den of serpents upon my head, and particularly of Guysot, I am resolved to do it. My love

for him has become changed to pity. I can not hate him, although sometimes when I see him trifling with virtue, it raises a momentary indignation in my breast, that so intelligent a man should thus prostitute himself to the baser parts of his nature, knowing that he is violating the laws of his being and of his God. For his own good, that he may have no more crimes to answer for than he now has, and for the salvation of the members of my own sex, I consider it my duty to expose this wicked thing. I have become calm and resigned to my fate. I have resolved to return as the prodigal and fall at the feet of my parents and ask their forgiveness, and ever after, so long as life lasts, will I be their faithful daughter. But I need help in this task. I fear my weakness. Will you help me?"

"Yes," I answered, "with all my heart."

"Come, then," she said, "next Saturday evening. The 'Circle' meets here on that evening. I will conceal you in this bedroom," which she showed me by swinging a huge mirror on its hinges, like a door, opening into the bedroom. The room was voluptuously furnished with soft lounges, *tete-a-tetes*, and mirrors extending from the floor to the ceiling. The windows were shaded with embroidered hangings, and the floor was covered with the softest of Brussels' carpet. The walls were hung with splendid paintings of Eves, Venuses, Bacchuses, and the like, entirely *nude*. A luxurious bed occupied the farther corner of the room. Its full and spotless purity, like some dazzling snow-bank, glowed with its brilliant whiteness. The edges of the sheets and pillow-slips were elaborately embroidered. The air of the room was redolent with perfumes. Four doors opened into the room: the mirror from the front; a door from the sitting-room; a door at the foot of the

bed, leading to a charming little bath-room; and a door opening from the outside, from the walk running around the house.

"You observe this is a splendid-room," my companion remarked.

"It is grand enough for the bridal chamber of a princess."

"*It is a bridal chamber—a bridal chamber of vice. It is a death chamber—the death chamber of virtue!* That spotless couch will continue to be the altar and tomb of immolated virtue, until some fearless hand draws aside the vail of enchantment, which throws its deceptive colorings around it, and exposes the frightful horrors hidden and rankling there in all the virulence of envenomed vice.

"On Saturday evening, at nine o'clock," she continued, "you enter cautiously at this door from the walk. The door will be unlocked. Bolt it after you, and stand behind this curtain covering the window. The mirror-door will be slightly ajar, so that you can see and hear all that is passing within the parlor."

The clock striking twelve seemed to alarm her, probably from fear of Mr. and Mrs. Guysot's return. We went to the parlor, and I was about taking my leave, when she grasped my hand, exclaiming, "Where is Emily?"—I could not answer.—I pointed upward.—It was enough—she read it all.—Pale and staggering she fell on my bosom. I supported her swooning form and bore it again to the sofa. The thought of being discovered in this situation seemed to revive her, and to give almost superhuman control over her feelings. She whispered to me, "Tell me how she died."

"I assisted in holding an inquest over her body, taken from the Mississippi at ——, about four weeks ago."

"Oh, my God! my God!" she screamed, raving like a maniac, till I began to fear troublesome consequences. I calmed her as much as possible, and suggested the propriety of her retiring to her room, as her emotions would most unquestionably be noticed by Mr. and Mrs. Guysot, and might give rise to unpleasant inquiries.

"Thank you, thank you! You are right. I will do as you say," she said, in a somewhat composed manner.

"Good night," said I, taking her trembling hand; "I will see you on Saturday evening."

I left the house, and wandered home with more singular thoughts than ever. I had finally traced this mystery out. But what now was to be done? what shall be made of it? I repeatedly asked myself the question, What course is it proper for me to take in this matter? Shall I expose this villain? have him arrested, and suffer the penalties of the law, or shall I merely give him and his infernal clique warning to cease their lascivious rites, and unfold to their fascinated victims, who now stand on the brink of destruction, the abyss of misery that lies at their feet? Or shall I do both, and not only that, but make the plot as public as possible, that society at large may be put on its guard against this vile worm of Free-Love that is rankling in its very heart? The woman! the woman! thought I, she will take the right course, no doubt; she will follow the impulse of her feelings. Her exposition of this secret and dangerous system of prostitution will be more vivid and effectual than any thing I can say.

I looked forward with no little anxiety to the adventure of the next Saturday evening. Indeed, that adventure might prove a serious matter to me, for if I should be drawn into an open rupture with these polished villains; their polished manners might give way

to their unrestrained passions, and my mouth might be silenced with a polished instrument, in a manner altogether too summary and effectual to suit my taste at this early stage of life. There was a fair prospect of my "paying dearly for my whistle." The idea occurred to me of having a few members of the police near at hand in case of need; but then, might not these same policemen do me more damage than good? When they find out that I am the poor, weak party, and these libertines, the rich and powerful party, will they not take me to jail and let them go free? Had I any reason to expect any different course from four-fifths of these "gentlemen of the club?" I finally concluded to trust to the *penetrating* eloquence of a revolver and bowie-knife, in case of physical argument being necessary.

CHAPTER VII.

A Spiritual Circle. A "Speaking Medium." Description and History of the Members of the "Circle." The Rev. M. Falleau. Mrs. M——, the Medium. The Widow Peabody. Landor. Miss B———, The Pork Merchant's Wife. Mrs. N———, etc. How Landor induced Miss B——— (a beautiful young lady) to attend these Meetings. Spiritual Wine. A Spiritual Dance. Rescue from Infamy. The Dance suddenly stopped. Dancers in Trouble. A Spiritual Leader Exposed. Matilda and Guysot. Terrible Scene. Death of the Leader. The Widow's Grief.

SATURDAY night, at nine o'clock, found me behind the curtain of the window in the luxurious bedroom, the mirror-door slightly ajar, as previously arranged, so that I could see and hear pretty much all that passed within the parlor. The company had nearly all arrived and was occupied in familiar little "chit-chats" on the spring-sofas, lounges, and easy-chairs

around the room. Mr. Guysot had just brought in a basket of champagne, accompanied by my fair companion with a server full of rather large wine-glasses. All the company drank. Some of the young ladies were reluctant about emptying their glasses, but they were urged until the task was accomplished. Next, a spiritual sister—a "speaking medium"—was called on for a communication. She stood behind the table, and after a few spasmodic twitches of the arms and hands, her eyelids closed. She stood a moment, then passing her hand across her forehead, she commenced with the same stereotyped "rigmarole" that we hear at all spiritual meetings. Her communication, however, was rather more interesting to the audience then present, than most of the communications we hear in public. The spirit that spoke through her (Byron's, I should judge from the tenor of the discourse) seemed to have an eye to the desires of the persons there assembled, and appeared perfectly willing to gratify those desires. The absurdities and vicious tendencies of the present marriage system, and the beauties and perfections of the Free-Love improvements were the themes of the communication.

At this moment my attention was arrested by some one entering the bedroom. The steps came cautiously and noiselessly toward the window. The curtain raised from behind; I felt myself in rather an uncertain situation, but on turning round, I saw it was all right—it was the bearer of the wine-glasses, Matilda. She whispered to me, standing by my side behind the curtain: "That lady speaking, is Mrs. Moredock, three months a widow. That gentleman sitting near her, with the sandy whiskers and moustaches and long flowing hair, a little bald, is Mr. Selon, her free-lover,

who seems to exercise all the freedom with her that a husband should. The lady becomes so exhausted nearly every night of their meetings, that it requires his constant attention till a late hour in the night to restore the equilibrium of her mind. That sharp-featured, hawk-eyed, squarechinned lady with the ringlets, having such remarkably red cheeks for cheeks so withered, sitting near the slender, pale-faced gentleman with blue eyes and black curly hair, is the widow Peabody, mother of nine children by two husbands; one of whom is deceased, and the other, *she says*, is divorced. She has scattered her nine children around the country so as not to interfere with the electricity of her 'passional attractions.' See, with what ghastly smiles and mawkish sensibility she endeavors to make herself agreeable to the gentleman by her side! She deceives herself with the idea that she appears young and charming. How disgusting to see age put on the airs of youth!

"That gentleman to the right, so splendidly dressed, is the rich Mr. Landor; he married an accomplished and amiable Kentucky lady, with whom he received a hundred thousand dollars. He does not bring her to these meetings, for his 'passional attraction' has attached itself to another object—to that beautiful young lady sitting by him, Miss Henriette Brandon, the daughter of a wealthy planter near ——, Louisiana. She is attending a young ladies' seminary in this city. Landor first saw her at an examination of this institution, when all the young ladies were arrayed in their most attractive apparel, of body and mind, to produce a favorable impression on the public, as to the superiority of this particular institution over all others, for developing the female mind. Henriette was dressed

very plainly, and she took an humble part in the exhibition; she merely sang 'Sweet Home;' but she sang that so well, so naturally, seeming to pour out her whole soul in those simple words, and her bearing was so modest and lady-like, and she was so supremely beautiful, passing all comparison with her schoolmates, and to crown all she was so unconscious of her bewitching power, that she fairly captivated every heart. There were busy inquiries, that evening, through that vast audience of delighted faces, 'Who is that young lady in plain white, with the simple white rose in her hair?' Landor found out her name and set himself about devising a plan to become introduced to her. By ill fortune, he found out an acquaintanceship had once existed between their parents: with this excuse, he sought and obtained an introduction, and so artfully did he throw his wiles around her innocent and inexperienced heart, that he perfectly won her confidence. He called for her frequently with his carriage, to give her a ride, taking the precaution to have a plainly dressed female with him, whom he introduced as 'sister Pierson, member of 'our church.' By taking Henriette's teachers occasionally along, he had no difficulty in getting the unsuspecting victim to accompany him to the different places of attraction in and about the city. She finally accompanied him alone to the meetings of the Spiritualists. Landor, professing to be an enthusiastic believer in their doctrines, used all his powers of persuasion to make her a convert to this system of delusion; and has partially succeeded. She steals out from her room at night, and secretly accompanies Landor to these accursed meetings. You can notice how strong is his 'passional attraction' for her by the ardor with which he gazes on her beautiful face and on her

swelling bosom. It seems to be with an effort that he prevents his passional feelings from pressing her to his bosom. She is a beautiful being, is she not? She is yet pure, but is fast imbibing that poison flowing from the eloquent lips of her seducer, which will lull virtue to sleep, and then the citadel of chastity will fall an easy prey to the enemy who watches, with gloating and eager eye, the favorable opportunity. See how she drinks in the smooth-flowing and seductive words of the medium, perfectly fascinated with the fatal influence of Spiritualism, whose heavenly robes conceal beneath their folds the demon of Libertinism! The speaker is repeating that dangerous doctrine of Free-Love, 'Your affections should be free to be bestowed on whomsoever you will.' 'It is your duty not to resist the dictates of your nature. Give way to your desires and enjoy to the fullest the pleasures of your passional feelings—those ecstatic pleasures, that consummation of earthly bliss!' See the soft relaxation passing over the features of the fascinated fair one, as she sinks into that dreamy state, insensible to virtue! She leans on the breast of her destroyer; she seems entirely in his power.

"Do you see that gentleman and lady sitting in the farther corner of the room, partially concealed by the window curtain—being behind the rest of the company? They are unnoticed. That gentleman is the Rev. Mr. *Falleau;* that lady is Mrs. C——, the wife of a rich pork merchant. Mr. C—— was a widower; Mrs. C—— was the dashing Miss M——; she married C—— (who is twenty years her senior) that she might continue to live a dashing life, for there was a rumor, and pretty well founded, that her dashing was about to dash her father over the precipice of bankruptcy. She and her husband are both members of the Rev. Mr.

Falleau's church. You observe that the couple are very good-looking, and appear to have a very strong 'passional attraction' for one another. Do you notice his arm around her slender waist and her head carelessly resting on his shoulder? See with what fond pressure he draws her to his bosom! She needs no poisoned nectar from the lips of the enchantress to throw her into the power of him who embraces her; her affections and person belong wholly to him already. Many are the times they have occupied this room together. Her husband is now in New York, absorbed in visions of hams, mess-pork and lard, while she, as you perceive, is more *Spiritually* engaged."

"Who is that lady Guysot is whispering with so intently?" I inquired (observing it was the same face I had seen in the hood at the theater).

"That is Mrs. M——, a broker's wife," she replied. "She was the celebrated coquette, MissB——, of Baltimore, who created such a sensation at Saratoga every season. She received a large legacy from her grandfather. Her husband is also very rich, but altogether too far along in years to reciprocate her strong 'passional attractions.' His soul is entirely absorbed in dollars and cents, and stocks of various kinds. His union with her was purely a 'commercial transaction,' 'a good investment,' 'a paying thing,' as he would style it. If there be any part of his soul not metallic, it is sensual. Having become middle-aged before marrying, he contracted those habits of sensual gratification that 'bachelors of the world,' in easy circumstances, are so apt to contract. Marriage did not eradicate that taste for 'variety,' which had become so inveterate with him; and his young wife soon became aware of it. She did not seem to take it much to heart, but made up her

mind to enjoy herself in the same way. I have strong reasons for believing that Guysot is a favorite of hers.

The most of the company are advocates and disciples of the Free-Love philosophy, and are here for its practical application and enjoyment. But I do pity that gentle being about to be ruined temporally and eternally; removed from home, with no mother to watch over her and keep her feet in the paths of virtue. Her ruin will be accomplished to-night unless we snatch her from the meshes of the destroyer, which now so beset the gentle victim that she will scarcely make an effort at resistance. What do you say? will you help me to save her? And let us not only break up their plans for to-night, but let us unmask this vile conspiracy and show its hideous features to the public, that no more victims may be drawn into this fatal pitfall."

"I am yours," I answered, grasping her hand; "count on all the assistance I am able to give."

"Even if we should lose our lives in this enterprise," she continued, "can we die in a better cause?"

"I don't much fear the smooth-faced villains hurting us," I answered, "for see here! (showing her my revolver and bowie-knife) here is death for six of them, and this good knife will argue with the balance. But where is Guysot's wife?" I asked.

"Oh! she is sent off to an acquaintance's, some four or five squares distant, every Saturday night, on the plea that her husband has a club-meeting here, and female company is not desirable. I will run and bring her, though it will be a terrible shock to her."

"No, I think we had better let her be," I replied; "for if she sees the infidelity and depravity of her husband, and he is thus exposed before her, there will be no hope of reforming him, which we had best try to do

first; and then, if this course fail—if he exhibits no remorse on hearing of the awful crimes he has committed, and caused to be committed; if conscience has become perfectly seared, then we will pursue him with the rigors of the law; for he is no more worthy to be called husband, or even man, and should be incarcerated as a ferocious beast, to protect society from his ravages. Recollect that, in punishing him openly, we punish his wife, who will feel its tortures as much more keenly than he, as her heart is more pure and sensitive than his. It is better to hold the rod of suspense over the heads of these serpents—have them to know that we can bring destruction on them at any time—than to make a public example of them at once. For, once branded as outlaws, they will become perfectly reckless, and will have no inducement to reform. Give them to understand that we are watching them, and if the assumed names we use in our public exposition of their doings do not stop their criminal acts, we will give the public their real names. Don't you think this would be the better way?"

"I believe you are right," she replied; "but I want to alarm these, as yet, virtuous females, that they may see on what dangerous ground they stand, and that they may shun these villains in future, as they would shun so many venomous reptiles."

By this time the medium indicated, by frequently passing her hand across her forehead, and by long intervals between her sentences, that the spirit was about leaving her, or else that the hopper of ideas was nearly empty. My companion whispered—

"I must go, for the company will soon have to be served with some more wine; this wine," continued she, "is drugged with ———, according to the direc-

tion of the spirits, I suppose, that it may have a more powerful effect in exciting the 'passional attractions.' Many is the bottle I have emptied of this dangerous liquid, and filled again with pure wine."

She left me, and in a few moments entered the parlor with Mr. Guysot, bearing more bottles and glasses. The glasses were emptied more readily this time than before.

One of the young ladies, with light clear complexion, lustrous golden hair, and lips like rosebuds, her large blue eyes flashing the fires of "passional" excitement, was called to the piano. She was a splendid performer. Oh! what heavenly music filled the room as she sang a passage from the "Bohemian Girl." When she was through with the song, Guysot arose and proposed, in conformity with the advice of the spirit's communication of that evening, which said, "Music and dancing should be practiced here below, as having a powerful influence in softening our 'passional' natures," that the company should at once engage in these *spiritual* exercises.

The chairs were quickly set back, the center-table placed in the corner of the room, and the company paired off.

"Give us a good polka," said Landor to the lady at the piano.

And now each swung his partner in this lascivious dance. I noticed the room was growing darker—the gas was being gradually shut off—which made the circling forms very indistinct. I advanced close to the mirror-door, feeling perfectly secure against detection; for the dancers were so entirely and ecstatically absorbed in the contemplation of their partners, to whom they were drawn by the intensest "passional attraction," that

they were lost to all other feelings or thoughts. That tall, handsome man, with the beautiful daughter of the South, almost carried her through the mazes of the dance, her head resting on his breast, and her lovely white arms, as soft and spotless as the whitest velvet, twined around his neck; his arm encircled her slender waist and held her angelic form in fond pressure to his own. In one of the dreamy, intoxicating circles of the dancers this beautiful couple disappeared.

I heard footsteps approaching from the sitting-room. I hastened behind the curtain. They came floating into the bedroom, in closer embrace than before. He drew the door after him, which shut with a spring; he did not appear to notice the mirror-door being ajar. They sank on a luxurious lounge; she seemed perfectly unconscious and resistless—entirely given up to his will. Delusion, "passional" excitement, and drugged wine had done their work, and done it effectually.

I have seen the beautiful butterfly circle around the flame till it was drawn irresistibly to its own destruction. I have seen the brilliant songster of the wood charmed by the wily serpent, and fall into its slimy jaws a victim to fascination. But here I saw an intelligent and immortal being, with spotless soul and angelic form, powerless in the arms of her destroyer—the destroyer not of the body alone, but of the mind, the morals, the soul—the destroyer of all that is of value in this life and the life to come—her energies paralyzed, unconscious of danger; virtue and delicacy stupefied! Oh! what a lamentable picture of the frailties of humanity was before me! Two beings bearing the image of their Creator, endowed with transcendent beauty and with superior intelligence, about to give themselves into

that deceptive embrace—an embrace that will be more fatal than the embrace of death to the yet virtuous being. Better, far better would it be if she could sink on her death couch than on that couch of prostitution; for the Rubicon of virtue once passed, farewell to all honor—to all chastity—to all peace here and hereafter! Why, oh, thou All-wise Creator, is it permitted that misery and death shall be allowed thus to disguise themselves? Why can not the frail one, who is about to be led from the paths of virtue, see the thorns and infinite miseries that, at no great distance, hedge up the broad road of vice she is about to enter!

Here my attention was arrested by an ineffectual attempt to open the door of the sitting-room. The next moment Matilda came rushing through the parlor with a lamp in her hand. She swung back the mirror, and entered the bedroom in the wildest excitement.

"Thank God, it is not too late!" she exclaimed. "Monster! leave her, or this shall make you!" drawing a bright blade from her bosom, and flourishing it with her right hand, her eyes gleaming as an infuriated woman's only can gleam.

The cowardly libertine disengaged himself roughly from the unconscious being that twined around him, and rushed to the parlor, crying "Murder! murder!" and knocking over half a dozen of the company who had crowded to the door of the bedroom.

"Rouse up!" said Matilda, laying down her lamp and lifting the maiden from the lounge. "Do you know what you are doing? Do you wish to be a prostitute?" she shrieked in her ear.

The fascination passed suddenly from her mind at the sound of this vile word. She slowly opened her

eyes and stared wildly around, as if waking from some hideous nightmare—as though some oppressive incubus were lifted from her breast.

"I see it, I see it as it is! Are you an angel sent to deliver me?" she said, with slow but impressive tone, gazing intently at Matilda, who still held her with her left hand.

"What are you about?" shouted Guysot, who had somewhat recovered himself, and had mustered courage enough to enter the bedroom, while sobs, shriekings, and faintings convulsed the parlor.

"Go back, villain!" replied the heroine sternly, piercing him with a glance that cowed his wicked heart. She advanced toward him, still holding the knife in her right hand and dragging the young lady with her left. She followed him into the parlor. "Silence!" she shouted, "I have something to say that concerns you all, and I want you to hear me. Brighten these lights, sir, for I want to be seen as well as heard."

"Is she mad?" "What does she mean?" "She's crazy!" "Let 's go!" "Come, I fear we 'll get into difficulty." "Oh, dear, how frightened I am!" "Stand before me, Mr. *Falleau*, for I am really afraid of the woman." "See, how her eyes glare like a maniac's!" were some of the expressions heard at this time. The handsome libertine, pale and trembling, stood by the hall-door, with one hand on the knob, his countenance indicating a terrible misgiving about the region of the heart.

"Sit down, all of you," said Guysot; "I will guarantee that none of you shall be hurt. Matilda has drank too much wine, I think, and it has gone to her head. Sit down, and I will light up, and we will hear what she has to say."

The company reluctantly obeyed, and the gas-lights were made to burn more brilliantly.

"Sit down, Charles, for I have something to tell that concerns you deeply," said Matilda. "I have resolved to change my life. I have lived a wicked life long enough. I am going home to my adopted parents, and will ask them for their forgiveness."

"Well, we have no objections," said Guysot; "you can go to-night, if you wish. So, if that is all you want, there is no use of your preaching to us any longer, or making more fuss about it. Go and pack up your duds, and I will pay your way on the first train."

He seemed very uneasy, as though he were apprehensive of a very interesting performance, called a "family scene," which might involve him as one of the characters, and he seemed very anxious to take Matilda at her word and get her off his hands as soon as possible. He acted just as I have seen men act before, who were afraid something would be said they did not wish to hear, and used their wits to the best advantage to ward off the danger. Henriette had sunk down on a chair by the side of the speaker and gazed intently in her face as in the face of a mysterious savior.

"But, sir," Matilda continued, "I am going to break up this infernal plot—this conspiracy against every thing virtuous—before I leave. You and your fellow-villains have drank enough of the blood of innocence, and you shall drink no more, or I will expose your black deeds to the world; ay, and I will set the dogs of justice on your track."

"See here, now, you've said enough," cried Guysot, jumping up and grasping an iron poker—his eyes fairly flashing with rage. "I want you to leave." He raised the iron to strike her.

"Help!" she cried, turning toward me.

I stepped out with the revolver in my left hand and the bowie-knife in my right. Guysot dropped the poker and started back, perfectly confused. A general rush was made for the door. "Shut that door, or you are a dead man," I shouted to the handsome Landor, who was about making good his escape. "I'll shoot the first one that attempts to leave this room. You shall hear what this woman has to say. And you, sir," addressing Guysot, "sit down on that chair and utter not a word till she has finished."

Henriette had fallen on the floor in a swoon and Matilda was plying the water and camphor to revive her.

"Oh, let me leave this place," she exclaimed, as she began to revive. "Oh, my God! deliver me from this dreadful place!"

She was soon able to sit up, and my companion commenced speaking again. Never before did I see expressions of fear, hatred, shame, and humiliation so commingled in the human countenance, as were exhibited in the countenances of that company. Guysot recognized me as the bookseller, I knew, by the way he looked at me, and he seemed to have a presentiment that I was his evil genius. Turning to him, Matilda said:

"Sir, you have been the cause of misery enough in this world, you should now be satisfied. You have blasted all my earthly hopes of pleasure. I loved you truly, passionately, when I knew you were wedded to another. I have suffered the penalty of that criminal love. Dearly have I atoned for it in tears of blood, in tortures of the soul that criminal hearts can only feel. I forgive you all the injury you have done me; but look here,—the ring!" turning to me; I handed it to her; "who shall forgive you this? Do you know it!" she

hissed in his ear, hardly able to speak, holding the ring close to his face, her eyes gleaming on him with an unnatural fire that seemed to pierce his very soul. "Read the letters inside the ring! Do you understand them?" she uttered between her clenched teeth.

He stared vacantly at the glittering jewel, his eyes dilated with horror. He seemed a lost soul, awaiting his eternal condemnation before the bar of God.

"Where is the finger that wore that ring?" she shrieked:—"that angel whom you stole from virtue and peace, and swore to love and protect? Where is she?"

Rigid with excitement in every limb she approached him till her lips almost touched his face, and whispered, in a withering tone, that an avenging spirit whispers to its doomed victim, "She is dead! *You* have *murdered* her!"

"You lie!" shouted Guysot, jumping to his feet; "you lie! you cursed hag," he shouted, springing at her with the ferocity of a tiger on its prey.

She fell back, and with a blow I felled him to the floor. He slowly rose and staggered to a chair.

"It is just! It is just! I deserve it!" he exclaimed; "I am a murderer. Oh, my God! have mercy on me! I see it, my horrid depravity! Forgive me, Oh my God! forgive me! No, I can not be forgiven—my sin is too great. Dead! dead! It can not be—she is not dead!" and he started up again, his eyes gleaming a demoniac stare, "you deceive me,—Emily is not dead! Tell me all, oh! quickly, and remove this fearful suspense. That lovely, that pure, that heavenly being! it can not be that she is dead! that I never can ask her forgiveness! Speak, why do you taunt me with this silence?"

"Sir," I answered, "I saw that ring drawn from the finger of a corpse—a beautiful female corpse—taken

"Where is the finger that wore that ring? That angel whom you stole from virtue and peace! You have *murdered* her!"

from the Mississippi river. She had, also, in her bosom a locket containing a likeness exactly resembling yourself. I assisted in holding an inquest over her and her unborn child. They now lie in the graveyard of ——.

Guysot uttered not a word, but stood transfixed to the spot, motionless, each muscle rigid as if its fibers had been of iron; a living picture of the agonies of remorse, terrible and unmitigated as the fires of eternal torture. The room was still as the grave. I could hear the low inspirations of his breast, and the very palpitations of his heart as it beat at irregular intervals. With painful effort he moved his head; this exertion seemed to break the paralysis that benumbed his system. He pressed his forehead and feebly groaned, "My brain! my brain! Oh, it is on fire!—help!" He staggered and would have fallen, but I caught him and laid his relaxed body on a lounge. Opening his eyes and reaching his hand toward Matilda, he said, feebly:

"Will you forgive me?"

"Yes," she quickly answered. "But do, I pray you, give up these wicked practices, and persuade your companions here to do the same, that no more innocent beings may be dragged down to destruction."

"Oh, I confess all," he exclaimed, "that I am the most degraded of beings. Oh, that I could recall the misery that I have caused! Oh, Emily! murdered Emily! you never can forgive me! Hell, yes! there must be a hell where I shall atone for this awful crime! Forgiveness! No, I can not ask for forgiveness; my crime is too great! I can not be forgiven. I should suffer eternally, it is right! I am conquered! Forgive me, my friends, that I have influenced you to do wrong. Shun this accursed system of prostitution I have taught

you—this snare of the Evil One—this emanation of hell. Try to make amends for the violations of weeping virtue that you have committed. I will bear all the blame. Let my soul go down to hell, there to burn in eternal torments, too little punishment for my atrocious sins! But oh! I pray you, tread no more in this bloody track!—Bring my wife, that I may ask her forgiveness!"

Matilda sprang from the door.

"My friends," he continued, in a stifled voice, "I feel that my criminal life is near its end. There is a deadening oppression in my brain, and it increases. I hear a mysterious noise in my ears, a roaring of waters. I am suffocated—I can hardly breathe. Open the windows. Oh, there is my wife! Start not—come quickly, for it soon will be over. I am dying!"

"What is this?" she whispered, her large eyes starting with affright, and a deathly paleness coming over her features.

"I have been deceiving you, cruelly deceiving you," he continued; "I have been false to you. Forgive me! Oh, forgive me! that a part of my burden may be removed. Oh, what misery! how long can it last! I feel a numbness creeping over me! Your forgiveness, quick!" he feebly stammered, reaching his hand spasmodically toward her.

She attempted to grasp it; with horror and despair depicted in her pallid countenance, she fell prostrate at his side, muttering, "The third time, the third time!"

"Oh, my God! There is no hope, no hope! Oh, it is so!" Matilda exclaimed, as if some terrible discovery had broken on her mind. "He will die, he will die! and have I caused this! Oh, what have I done!" She continued in these exclamations, weeping and wringing her hands in the utmost agony.

"What mean you?" I asked.

"Oh, sir, be quick! help him; it is that fearful apoplexy; he has had it twice before, and the doctor said if he should have it the third time, he would die. Oh! if you can, help him, quickly. Oh, my God! my God! what shall I do?" and she raved like one deranged.

"Be calm, Matilda, your acting thus will make him much worse," I replied.

I soon became satisfied that she was right; that a blood-vessel had been ruptured in his brain by the intense mental excitement, and that the brain was slowly but surely being compressed by an effusion of blood. He had now become perfectly insensible; his pulse was full and sluggish, his breathing laborious, attended with that alarming symptom of snoring and puffing out of the lips at every breath. His eyes became fixed, taking no notice of any thing before them. He appeared not to hear what was spoken to him. I had a lancet in my pocket, and tying up both his arms, set a stream of blood running from each. I had his head elevated and held over a tub, then I poured pitcherful after pitcherful of cold water from a hight on the crown of his head, hoping to remove that fatal pressure that was fast smothering out the spark of life.

And oh! what a scene that room presented! I can not describe it. Death is awful when its approach is foretold by oft-repeated warnings, when friends have been expecting it from day to day, for weeks, or perhaps for months; but when it comes suddenly, although the mourners know that the victim is prepared for it by a virtuous life, and is but exchanging this life for a better one, it is a still more awful shock. Nothing so arrests our worldly thoughts and schemes. It seems to command our attention, our sympathies, and our grief. It

startles us as though a judgment trump had aroused us from our pleasant dreams. It comes across our worldly track and bids us stop and see where our life-journey must end. If death be dreadful here—how much more dreadful, with what inexpressible horror is it surrounded when the poor victim is leaving this world with hands red with the blood of murdered innocence—with heart calloused by a life of crime, and where the mourners—if mourners there be—are comrades in the victim's guilt, viewing the sad scene that they themselves must soon pass through. Oh, who can imagine that awful spectacle!

There were instances of heartfelt repentance in that throng. The monster of licentious freedom showed itself, undisguised, in all its loathsome deformity. It hung its serpent-head in shame, and for a time, its worshipers disclaimed allegiance to its disgusting reign.

My efforts to restore him were in vain. His breathing grew heavier, and at longer intervals, and finally ceased. He was dead! Oh! the soul-piercing shrieks that rent that room! they still ring in my ears! May it never be my fate again to listen to such groans of agony!

One by one the company left the room, for conscience—guilty conscience—rendered it as unpleasant now, as "passional attraction" had rendered it enticing before. The occupants of the parlor now were the corpse, the prostrate and insensible widow, my companion in this melancholy affair, who still raved and would not be comforted, the young lady snatched from infamy, who seemed perfectly stupefied with horror, the servant-girl who had come up from the kitchen attracted by the screams and commotion above, standing like an idiot with stupid stare and speechless tongue, not know-

ing what she was about, and myself, with head almost turned by the harrowing scenes I had witnessed.

I thought it my duty to remain till the stricken beings before me should pass through the severity of the storm of sorrows that surrounded them. I said nothing, for what could I say? Words of consolation would be but mockery! I became more and more concerned as to the effects this shock was producing on their minds; and even when my mind was thus excited, and wholly occupied and alive to what was before me, the self-criminating question whispered—Have I not gone too far? am I innocent of these fatal consequences?

Mrs. Guysot raved until she had become entirely exhausted. We had succeeded in getting her to take a few drops of laudanum, for I feared she might add another victim to the horrors of that night. She finally sank into a deep slumber, or rather an insensible state.

After bringing the servant girl to a state of consciousness, I sent for an undertaker, who soon arrived, and we laid out the corpse on the cooling-board. I did not think it necessary to tell him the circumstances of Guysot's death, merely stating that he died of apoplexy.

The undertaker having departed, I returned to the sitting-room and found Matilda partially composed; the thought of her being the cause of Guysot's death seemed to harrow her soul continually. I endeavored to impress on her the necessity of overcoming her feelings to attend to Mrs. Guysot, whom I considered in a critical situation. By such persuasions, I succeeded in getting Matilda and the young lady, Miss Brandon, to assist in carrying Mrs. Guysot to her bedroom. Leaving full directions as to what was to be done, I prepared to depart, having assured them that I would return after I had obtained some rest, for my own mind was stagger-

ing from the intense excitement and over-exertion of the preceding hours.

I pray God that I never may have to pass through such an ordeal again. A desire, approaching almost to enthusiasm, of witnessing human actions under singular and unnatural circumstances, would not tempt me to witness a repetition of the scenes of that evening.

Passing the cathedral, on my way home, its bell struck three. It startled me; I had no idea it was so late. When the mind becomes wholly absorbed in intense excitement time passes unnoticed, as in a dream.

CHAPTER VIII.

House of Mourning. Mrs. Guysot. Henriette. Inside History of a Boarding School for Young Ladies. Mrs. Jelliot, the Matron. A remarkable Sunday Morning Breakfast. A solitary Burial. Another Victim of Spiritualism. A Harrowing Scene. The Monster Free-Love. Arrival of Mrs. Guysot's Parents; their deep Affliction. Melancholy Journey.

AFTER getting some rest and refreshment, I returned to the house of mourning. I found its inmates prostrated with grief that refused to be assuaged. Mrs. Guysot had awakened to the dread reality of her condition. The storm had spent its violence on her broken heart, and she lay sunk in the lifeless calm of hopeless despair. Her spirit was doubly smitten. Earth was now a dreary waste, barren of joy. As I approached her, she raised her melancholy eyes. No spirit was there. Gloom, despair, unrelieved by a ray of hope, shadowed forth from those dark mirrors of the soul. Oh, what a painful look! what grief unmitigated did those eyes express! she spoke not. Her feelings were too deep for words. There is an intensity of grief that

extends to the innermost depths of the soul that words can not reach, nor can the face indicate it. The eye, at such times, takes an unnatural luster, a spiritual fire, that thrills and alarms the beholder. We left her alone, for what consolation could we give! Matilda tried to compose herself, that she might be of service to Mrs. Guysot, but her feelings would frequently overflow and burst forth in a flood of tears. Oh! what a relief to the pent-up sorrows is this heaven-made faculty; this power of weeping; it is the torrent to the consuming flames. And thus did Matilda subdue the fires that would, ever and anon, flash up from their smothered bed. But the poor wife of Guysot had not this relief. The fount of her tears was dried. The intensity of her grief had driven the moisture of life from their beds. If Guysot had died in virtue, in the nobility of manhood, the stroke would not have been so cruel. But, oh! to be conscious of his going into the presence of a just God from the very scenes of his wickedness, with his soul stained with the blood of murdered virtue, oh! it was this horrid thought that added poignancy to the grief of the mourners.

Henriette insisted on staying with her "angel spirit," as she called Matilda. Her heart, overflowing with childlike gratitude, seemed almost to worship her. She refused to return to her boarding-house. The thought of how near she had been to the brink of infamy, and how she had been rescued from plunging into its bottomless depths of woe, made her whole being shudder with horror. Like a child escaped from some dreadful danger, she feared to venture from the shadow of her protector. I remonstrated with her on the impropriety of absenting herself from her boarding-house. She obstinately refused to go, saying, "She was afraid to be

alone." It was enough to touch the hardest heart, to see such angelic loveliness so bound with innocent gratitude to its benefactor. Oh, how depraved! how ruthless the man who could deliberately throw the snares of seduction around so innocent, so beautiful a being; whose heart was so pure, so confiding; a lovely flower, exhaling the aroma of Heaven. Sacrilege!—it is worse than sacrilege.—Sacrilege harms not the object of the insult, but only the insulter; while this crime aims its poisoned barb at the very heart of its victim, laid open to the seducer by its innocent confidence: it is the murder of the soul. I took it on myself to go to Henriette's boarding-house to try and explain her absence to the matron satisfactorily. This boarding-house was kept expressly for young ladies from a distance, who were attending school in the city. I was ushered into the parlor of *Mrs. Jelliot* by a Bridget, whose head reminded me of a mouse-nest in a tow-heap, and whose big round face (which would have been red if the alluvial deposits had been removed), of the sun seen through a smoked glass. She had arms and hands to match, and a pair of feet that made themselves manifest at every step, by a quick, dull clap of collision between soles and sole leather. She wore a dirty calico dress, a bifurcated apron, reeking with dish-water, and a petticoat whose variegated scollops and fringes could be seen without the fashionable and laborious process of raising the dress. "I wish to see Mrs. Jelliot." "And is it in regard to the young ladies you wish to see Mrs. Jelliot." "Yes." It was some minutes before the formidable proprietress of the house came in, pinning on a cap, as she entered. It was plain that the fat old lady had been working the hardest, for the last few moments, to produce as great a change as possible in

her external appearance; thinking, no doubt, that I was a friend of some of her boarders, or that I was bringing a new accession. It is really astonishing how suddenly these boarding-house matrons can undergo a metamorphosis. In a space of five minutes they will so transform themselves as not to be recognized by their own servants. When Bridget tells them there is a "genteel call," the change in their appearance is as much greater than that from the chrysalis to the butterfly, as it is quicker: they would make capital performers on the stage, where sudden changes of dress and character are required. Mrs. Jelliot, in the hurry of transformation, had forgotten her wig, but had stuck on the curls, presenting a beautiful contrast of dark brown shading over an iron-gray groundwork. She was very polite; hoped we would excuse the *deshabille* of things in general, as two of her girls had just left (which they are guilty of doing every time a stranger happens in unawares). I broke in on her apologies by saying that Miss Brandon's absence was owing to her assisting a friend, whose family had been bereaved of one of its members the night before. "I thought Miss Henriette had gone to the Bible class. Probably she was not aware, this morning, of her friend's bereavement, else she would have told me, as I take the liberty of exercising a close supervision over the visits of the young ladies intrusted to my care. Some of them think I am most too strict," she said, with what was intended to be a modest self-approving smile.

"You can tell Miss Henriette that she can stay till tea-time, but must surely come back then, as I feel under great responsibilities in reference to my 'charges.'"

"I will give her your message," I replied, bidding her good morning. As I was passing through the hall, an

uninitiated Miss swung the dining-room door open, not being aware that said door was not to be opened when visitors were in the hall. I saw, scattered over a long table, the remnants of a "three dollars a week" boarding school breakfast. It told, most eloquently, what an interest boarding-school matrons take in the temporal welfare of the aforesaid "charges." A potatoe or two boiled with the skin on (which manner of cooking these delightful roots, matrons are aware is the simplest and most healthful), kept manners at long intervals through the tables. The outside crusts of some baker's loaves, puffed worse than any quack medicine, kept company with the above named vegetables. A mussed-up dab of butter, on a little plate, here and there, maintained its ground by sheer force of strength. These delicacies were presided over, at proper distances, by eighteen penny molasses cans, innocent of contents, except a dark sediment at the bottom; they looked like so many forlorn sentinels of a rainy morning, in time of peace, keeping guard over empty barracks. A huge platter, with a crack through the middle, and a notch broken out at the commencement of said crack, extended across one end of the table. An unwieldly buck-horn handled carving knife and fork, large enough for a Don Quixote's sword and spear, lay composedly in the platter in juxta-position with a section of an ox's shoulder blade. I imagined the following conversation taking place between the steel weapons and the decarnified scapula. "We have conquered you, although it was a hard struggle. It is fool-hardy for beef, though from the thick neck of an Illinois buffalo, to contend against our resistless temper." Mr. Carving-knife, turning to his consort of the platter, remarks; "I wonder how ivory manages to hold its own with what such steel as ours can scarcely

overcome." "This is a mystery I never could penetrate," Madam Fork replies, with a click of her thumb-spring, "though my powers of penetrating and prying into things have the proverbial acuteness of my sex." The charred remnants of one dismembered biscuit remained "solitary and alone," to bear testimony that "we had our Sunday morning (light?) cakes."

* * * * *

The burial was to take place at two in the afternoon. I can not describe the solemnity of that mournful scene,—the unutterable grief that bore down the hearts of the mourners. No words were spoken,—no prayers were offered,—no preacher poured his words of consolation into the soul-wounds of the afflicted. The undertaker, by the help of the hack-driver, bore the coffin to the hearse. No long array of carriages, filled with sympathizing and unsympathizing relations, and acquaintances, and strangers, resorting to funerals for a gratuitous ride, followed the hearse. A single carriage containing the three ladies and myself, was all that followed in that dreary procession.

Oh, who can describe the pangs of a widow's heart! The more worthless and abandoned the object she mourns, the more poignant seems her grief. The nearer we approached the grave, the more insupportable was her agony; and when the coffin was let down into its deep, dark cell, and it gave forth its dead, horrid discords, as the clods fell rudely down, it seemed to snap her very heart-strings, that had so long vibrated but to sounds of sorrow, increasing in the deep painfulness of their tones.

She sank down with a groan that came from the deep wound of her soul,—the last breath that relentless grief extorts from its tortured victim. A deathly

paleness came over her features. Every muscle relaxed. As the delicate plant reared in the shaded parlor, wilts in the mid-day sun, so she sank under the withering rays of insupportable grief. Her limbs hung powerless toward the earth. Cold drops of sweat started from her face. Her cheeks grew pallid and then purple. In vain I called for some stimulant, to call back the spark of life. No smelling-bottle,—no camphor,—not even a drop of water was to be had. Oh, for one little cup of simple water! Of what priceless value it would have been! We fanned her,—we rubbed her (for the excitement of the moment had driven mourning for the dead from our thoughts) but in vain! we could not bring the warmth back to her hands, we could not keep the dark blood from settling around those crystal nails. She looked intensely and fixedly upward. A dimness was slowly coming over those soul-speaking eyes; their brilliance, that had dazzled the heart of every admirer, was fast passing away before the cruel pencil of obliterating death. Oh, cruel Death! why, oh! why dost thou delight in drawing thy black pencil over such pure and lovely features! Was it not sufficient that cruel affliction and despair should have shaded them with fixed melancholy; that thou shouldst add the finishing touch of lifeless dissolution? But how useless, how hopeless are petitions to this relentless tyrant! He laughs at our entreaties. The death-bed is his joy, his feast. The more lovely the object, the more delectable the morsel to his revolting appetite. Her heart beats faintly and fitfully. Her breath comes convulsively, and at longer intervals. A suffocating gasp, with that fearful death rattle,—and she breathes no more. The undertaker came running from the nearest house with camphor and water, a group following in his wake.

But it was too late! she was dead! Her sufferings were at an end. Her spirit had flown to its native land. And will it meet there the spirit of her false husband? Thou alone, infinitely just God, knowest. The greedy and insatiable monster of "Free-Love," gloated over another victim. A third murder was laid at the door of libeled "Freedom." The dreadful scene had perfectly overpowered the two frail beings who knelt over the inanimate body before them. Matilda, with hands clasped over her breast, her eyes riveted on the face of the dead, rocked to and fro, her blanched lips moving mechanically, a low and almost inaudible whisper coming from them: My God! my God! have mercy! Henriette knelt speechless, with staring and uplifted eyes, terror stricken. This was grief too poignant for wailing; it descended to the depths of the heart unmoved by the ripplings of common sorrow. I leave the imagination to depict the sad task before us. The kind neighbors volunteered to take charge of the preparations for the interment; and the carriage took its stricken beings back to their doubly desolate home: and there we left them, to contend with grief that mocked consolation. I considered it my duty to inform Mrs. Guysot's parents of the decease of their daughter, and accordingly telegraphed the melancholy tidings. It brought the response, "We will come." The next evening brought Mr. and Mrs. Beaumont to the late home of Guysot. Is there a pen that can describe a parent's grief at the loss of a child? Is there a tongue that can tell a mother's feelings at the loss of a daughter? The parents, whose features bore the unmistakable impress of long affliction, sat in silence, the tears coursing down their furrowed cheeks. They seemed afraid to ask the particulars of the melancholy occur-

rence, as though they feared unwelcome answers. The next morning I accompanied them with Henriette and Matilda, to the house near the cemetery, where lay the body of their daughter. Not a word was spoken. The carriage stopped, and I supported the tottering mother to the house. She sank exhausted into a chair. The room that contained their child, was pointed out to them. I left the house, for I had witnessed enough of such harrowing scenes. Scarce had I closed the door behind me, when my ears were pierced with a single scream of agony, which told too plainly of the pang that mother's heart had felt. I rushed to the room, and found her swooning in the arms of the father. She was quickly taken to the open air, where she revived and walked alone to the sitting-room. She seemed perfectly composed. That one shock, excruciating and crushing as it was, had paralyzed her grief, and braced her against any thing that could afflict her. Affliction had spent its last arrow in piercing that maternal heart; it was transfixed, and no more could it quiver at the wounds of lesser griefs.

CHAPTER IX.

Gratitude of an Affectionate Heart. A Lovely Creature. Beauty in the Country and Beauty in the City. A Perfect Woman. How and where to find a handsome and sensible Woman. Cause of Homely Women. A Good-for-nothing Woman. Base Conduct of a Spiritualist. Infamous "Communications" of a "Medium." an Affecting Scene in the Cars.

THE violence of the storm having passed, the parents were again calm,—and tried to be resigned to their affliction, saying it was from God, and he did all for the best. They resolved to take the body of their child with them to Baltimore, to be interred in the family

vault, where they could mourn over the remains of what was the pride of their hearts. They proposed that Matilda should accompany them; which proposition she received with joy, for she longed to leave this place, which now was associated with so many painful recollections. But Henriette would not listen to this arrangement. She said, in her childlike simplicity, that Matilda should never leave her, and she threw her arms around Matilda's neck, kissing her as though she had been a fond parent, while the tears glistened in her dark eyes and suffused her cheeks, whose clearness blushed with delicate carnation, were rendered more lovely by the liquid gems silently coursing down their soft surface. She begged Matilda not to leave her. How touching her innocent words as they came from those ruby lips, red as if chiseled from brightest coral, slightly parted with the intensity of her petition, displaying the crowns of her even and brilliantly white teeth! A more lovely, enchanting being than Henriette, I never beheld. There was something so bewitchingly natural about every feature and every expression, that perfectly carried away the beholder with admiration, or I might almost say, with idolatry. Reared on a plantation adjoining the suburbs of a large town, having the healthful advantages of country air and exercise, commingled with just enough of city society to polish her manners, the natural perfections of her queenly form became developed, as her gifted mind, and pure, sensitive heart were improved by mental training.

There was an indescribable loveliness about Henriette that one can appreciate but not express in words. All of us have seen, in our lives, beings that seemed our *beau ideal* of perfection; beings that struck us with an

admiration bordering almost on idolatry. If we were called on to describe them, to delineate the particular features that called forth our admiration, we should be at a loss to do so. There is a combination of physical, mental and moral beauties that make up these lovely flowers,—such a perfect correspondence of every part,—that the whole strikes us with a pleasant charm, whose passing loveliness we could not alter but to mar. We feel the utter inability of conveying the sensations they produce in our mind to others. As well might we attempt to describe the tints and perfumes of the brilliant and fragrant flower; it must be seen; its fragrance must be breathed to be appreciated. Commence analyzing the individual beauties for accurate description and you kill the ideal perfection.

Thus it was with the beautiful Henriette. The most stoical beholder could not gaze on her but to admire. And her personal beauty (which she seemed unconscious of possessing) but corresponded with the more lasting ethereal beauties of her mind and heart. If there are beings on earth but a step removed from angels, she was one of those beings. It is useless to search for such faultless loveliness in the polished society of our large cities. However promising the opening bud may be of future perfections, its colors fade, its freshness wilts before it has fairly bloomed.

Ere the maiden has reached the age of ripe womanhood, she has lost those natural charms that should attract the admiration of the lovers of the beautiful. No wonder our city ladies lose their personal charms so soon; their manner of living could produce no other result: reared in indolence; taught that bodily exercise is unbecoming a lady; the mind, stimulated to exercise disproportionate to that of the body; the food of the most

stimulating kind, fit only for those engaged in powerful exercises in the open air; habits of amusement the most irregular and exhausting on the nervous energies. In a word, it seems as though it were the study of our fashionable ladies to invent the quickest way of destroying their beauty, of giving the most depraved constitution to their offspring, and of bringing their own lives to the very shortest limit, without actually committing suicide. How few handsome women do you meet, sweeping the streets with costly silks, or rolling along in splendid coaches! Although dressed gorgeously, and sailing along as gracefully as some fairy ship, through the living waves of the fashionable promenade; though she be erect and smiling and can raise the skirt of her rich silk dress to show the snowy and richly-embroidered underclothes, with the most bewitching grace, still she is not handsome; she has that yellow complexion which no lily-white nor rouge can correct: her features are thin and angular, or if full, are soft, colorless and sickly in appearance. She does not enjoy herself; she is of no use in society. She is unfit for a wife or a mother, and soon arrives at a helpless and premature old age. But give me a girl from the country for beauty, for service, for a wife, for a mother and a companion through life. You will see more real beauty and female worth in walking through a small country village, on some Sunday when the country girls are coming to church, than in a year's search in the city.

The country girls have great reason to rejoice that they are not bound with the servile chains of fashion, as their metropolitan sisters are. And not only are their personal charms superior, but their minds also. There is some satisfaction in sitting down to talk with a country girl: she has not learned that operas, and polkas,

and poodles, are the only legitimate subjects of conversation for a lady. No less refreshing is it in the heats of summer, to leave the heavy, tainted, smoky atmosphere of the metropolis, and breathe the pure air of the summer forests, than to exchange the artificial, senseless society of ladies of fashion for the pure angelic influence of woman moving in her native bowers. Such a refreshing, delicious sensation was experienced in the society of the beautiful Henriette. She seemed all that perfect natural loveliness, adorned, but not marred by art, could be. So seldom does the lover of pure nature meet with such beings as she, that, as when he sees a rare and most beautiful flower in his pathway, he stops and gazes long, in rapturous and holy admiration.

Mr. Brandon had sent Henriette (who was the only solace of his widowed heart) to Cincinnati, more particularly to take lessons in music of the distinguished professors of this city. Before coming here, she had been under the tuition of a private governess of superior qualifications, who had recently come in possession of some property that relieved her from the drudgery of teaching for a living (although she said it always was a pleasure to instruct her dear "Hettie"). Henriette had felt orphaned, since being deprived of the society of her governness and father; she had no one here to confide in as a friend; the cold and cheerless boarding-house was a dreary dungeon to her warm and joyous heart. In an evil hour she was introduced to Landor. It is not to be wondered at that her confiding and inexperienced nature was easily led astray by the deceptive persuasions of this dangerous man, disguised as they were under the garb of friendship. Landor's father and Mr. Brandon had been school-fellows, and he had taken advantage of this circumstance to win the

confidence of Henriette to further his fiendish schemes. By exciting her vivid imagination with the delusions of Spiritualism, he had got her completely in his power. He had so arranged the spiritual communications, that they led this innocent girl to believe that her affections should be wholly bestowed on him; that he was the being who was created for her natural partner, and that she was but obeying the irresistible laws of her "passional nature," in bestowing her affections wholly on him; that it was right and obligatory on her to enjoy to the fullest, the pleasures of that "passional attachment," and that a consummation of those passional enjoyments was not a crime, but an obedience to the commands of Nature. And, so skillfully were the snares of the seducer twined around the heart of his victim, that she was wholly borne away by these delusive, intoxicating reveries. He carried his infernal plot so far as to profess to have the spirit of her sainted mother in communication with the medium; and that disgusting thing, in the shape of woman, stood up and avowed herself to be speaking the words of a mother to her child, when she said it was her desire that her loved Henriette should prostitute herself to the base desires of Landor. Oh, what atrocious wickedness! Why, oh God, dost thou not strike down with instant death, the fiend who can thus assume thy prerogative to delude and drag down to her own hell a pure and innocent sister! But, thus far, merciful God! thou hast frustrated and confounded the plans of the seducer, after all his skillful and hellish plottings. Continue thy protection over this child of Heaven, that she may go to thy bosom pure and uncorrupted!

Matilda finally consented to remain with Henriette till her term of tuition expired, and then to go home

and live with her. Considering the obloquy that society casts on the female that takes but a step from the path of propriety, and how unforgiving that society is, and unrelenting in its punishment of the erring frail one, Mr. and Mrs. Beaumont thought, perhaps, this might be the better course; for, returning where she was known, she could hope but to meet the scorn and derision of her former acquaintances, except, perhaps, her adopted parents, whose love could never be alienated. And this contempt of a fastidious society might drive her into that abyss of recklessness, where so many have engulfed themselves in hopeless misery. Mr. Beaumont gave her all the furniture of the house and a hundred dollars in money, that being amply sufficient to pay her expenses while remaining in the city.

Henriette's term of tuition would expire in about two months; she did not wish to leave before that time, for fear of paining her dear father's heart by a recital of the reasons that caused her to leave.

With swimming eyes and heavy hearts, and with touching and painful farewells, the stricken parents took leave and pursued their gloomy way with the sad remains of their cherished daughter. Ah, what sad thoughts filled their souls in this dreary journey! How jarring to their feelings the light talk of those around them, who knew not of their grief. One of the most melancholy scenes I ever witnessed, was a mother returning home in the cars with the corpse of a beloved daughter by her side. The father met her at one of the stations. It was a mournful meeting. A husband, wife, and the lifeless body of their loved child. Not a word was spoken. The husband took the hand of his sobbing wife. Not a muscle moved in his manly face, but the tears silently coursing down his rigid features,

told how deep the shaft of agony had sunk into his heart. I wept, for I could not help it. It was but Nature's tribute of sympathy. Thus did this father and mother pursue their homeward course, bereft of all that was dear to them this side the grave.

CHAPTER X.

Matilda's Revelations of the horrid Acts of the Spiritual Free-Love Society. Mary Vernon, the beautiful Glovemaker. Her sad History and unhappy Death. A Family ruined by the Spiritual Demon. Pollock, the Spiritual Lecturer. Inhuman Wickedness of a Female Medium. The lost One. Spiritualists alarmed at their Wickedness. The Porter's and the Lady-boarder's Story. A Home destroyed.

AT the solicitation of Matilda and Henriette, I called on them daily to give them what consolation my company could afford. At one of my visits, I suggested to Matilda, whether it was not our duty to expose this vile system of delusion, by which she and others had suffered so much; and I asked if she would not be willing to tell me her sad experience, and all the incidents she had become acquainted with in her connection with these Spiritualists and Free-Lovers while in this city. She replied, rather would I obliterate forever those memories from my mind. Oh! that I never could think of the scenes I have witnessed,—of the crimes against religion, virtue, and even decency; that I have known to be committed under the deceptive garb of Spiritual "Freedom." I insisted that she owed it as a duty to the protection of the chastity of her sex, that she should contribute her mite to unmask these monsters, that were gorging themselves with the very life's-blood of society. I asked if she would not give me a

history of some of the victims, she had so frequently referred to; not for the gratification of a morbid curiosity, but to furnish me with specimens of the fruit of these deadly upas, to whose boughs, its unsuspecting victims are seduced by the fascinating brilliance of its verdure, and the golden hues of its enticing fruits, which, though attractive to the eye, are ashes and bitterness to the taste. With much reluctance she consented that I should use what I thought best of what she already had told me, if it would contribute to the rooting up of these deadly growths of sin, these rank excrescences of diseased humanity; she said that it would take too long to recount, at present, all of sad interest she had witnessed in this house, but that she would write the incidents down at her leisure, as well as she could, and that I might use what I thought would contribute to the furtherance of my object. Three or four days afterward, she handed me a manuscript containing the following:

"Among the first that attended our Spiritual Circle, was Mary Vernon. She was about twenty years of age, and kept a glove shop on —— street. Her father was a glove maker, and established the business and stand which she then carried on, for the support of herself, her palzied mother, a young sister, and two brothers still younger; her father having died about three years before. Few families were happier than theirs. I have often called at her shop, and never could get away, without going through the little back room, and up-stairs, to spend a few moments with her afflicted mother. Soon after the birth of her last child, her mother, in attempting to move about too soon, to attend to her domestic affairs, as many another mother does, fell from the top of the stairs by a sudden exhaustion, and striking her back on the edge of a step, received

an injury that palzied her lower limbs ever after; she had no motion or feeling in her legs and feet,—no more than if they had been so much dead flesh hanging to her body. She had to exercise a constant care over them, to keep them from being burnt or frozen, for they conveyed no sensation of such injury themselves. She sat continually in her armed chair, except when she was in bed, laid there by her affectionate daughters. Her dreary hours were passed in sewing gloves. Often would she sit by the front window and enliven her monotonous occupation by noticing the stream of living humanity that continually flowed along the streets. Her younger daughter, Sarah, just turned into her seventeenth year, did the housework; Edgar the eldest boy, about fourteen, was employed as messenger at a large dry-goods store; he boarded at home, and Thomas, named after his father, was attending school. There was a singularity in the personal resemblance of the girls to the father, who they said, was of very light complexion, blue eyes and light hair, and of the boys to the mother, who was a decided brunette. Mary, the eldest, was a woman fully developed, and possessed no ordinary attractions of person. In stature, she was neither too small nor too large, just right; and her form, which was best shown by her simple dress, was all that an artiste could desire, as a perfect model; and such a clear white complexion, exquisitely tinged with its indescribable vermilion,—and such lips! whose exquisite texture and living redness I can not compare to any thing in nature but themselves. Her teeth were regular and of a brilliant whiteness. Her hair was light, too light many would say for beauty,—but there was a fineness, a rich glossiness of color which so well became her blonde complexion, that it seemed to me

no other hair would look so beautiful on Mary. Her eyes were large, blue, and full of expression; her whole soul could be read in their crystal depths. To look into her eyes seemed like being admitted behind the frail curtains of the mind,—into its hidden and spiritual depths. Mary's description would answer for her sister Sarah, allowing for that ripening of the budding maiden into the full blown flower of womanhood. Mary was too handsome to be exposed continually to the public gaze; the fruit was too tempting to hang thus over the public thoroughfare. That rude and lawless hands would attempt to pluck it, was natural and inevitable. No doubt she sold many pairs of gentlemen's gloves, that she would not have sold, if she had not been Mary Vernon.

But then she lost many lady customers, who did not wish to be mortified the second time by a comparison of their long, bony digits, with her soft tapering fingers, as she was always anxious to assist the lady purchasers in getting their gloves on the first time,—which is quite a formidable enterprise. It requires an exercise of no little amount of mechanical skill, and of the greatest patience, beside great discretion in the use of suggestions, as to the size that would probably suit; all ladies insisting on wearing Misses, or even children's sizes. Mary accomplished many "fits," that did not argue well for her faculty of distinguishing proportions; often were the first and second joints of fingers covered for the whole finger; often was the "fit" so perfect that the wearer could not bend the finger; and often did Mary's heart beat with anxiety for fear the over-strained seams would give way. Mary was conscious of attracting public notice, and it was the source of no little embarrassment to her; often was her beauty hightened

by the irresistible blush sent to her cheek, by the intense gaze of an admiring customer. She would not thus have exposed herself to the public gaze if she had not felt it her duty to carry on this business for the support of the family. Her father having always been engaged in it, and having brought his family up to the business, it seemed the only occupation to them, by which they could get a support. The division of business in a large city into separate departments, confining operators to a single branch of a single business, disqualifies them from succeeding in any other calling. Indeed, few thus brought up have the courage to undertake any thing outside their narrow sphere. Mary, with the help of the elder brother, was supporting the family in independence and respectability. They were happy. When they closed their shop at night, and all sat down in the nice little parlor around the center-table, with its plain Argand lamp; the mother and daughters sewing, and the elder brother reading from some interesting book, which he drew from the Mercantile Library, they presented a pleasant picture of domestic contentment and happiness. The mother, before retiring to rest, read a chapter from the well-used family Bible, and offered up a prayer for the benediction of her beloved family. Oh! that this happy circle, consecrated to virtue and religion, might always have remained unbroken. Mary had attracted the attention, and excited the desires of an itinerant Spiritual lecturer, who, as I afterward learned, had a wife and three children living in western Pennsylvania—his name was Pollock. I heard a conversation between him and Mrs. Moredock (a medium) one evening, the subject of which was to devise some plan to entice Mary Vernon to their meetings. "I have it, I have it!" said Mrs. Moredock; "I will make

inquiries as to her history: she has lost her father I know, for I have frequently heard people speak of it, who said they bought gloves of 'Mary,' as they familiarly call her, to aid her in supporting the family, the responsibility of which rests on her. When I have found out the peculiarities of her father, and his ordinary expressions, I will have his spirit up at our meetings, requesting me to bear his communication to his daughter." "That 's it! that 's it! you 've hit it, that 's just the plan, Mrs. Moredock," the lecturer exclaimed, heartily shaking the medium's hand. "When will you see her; get it all fixed up by the next meeting, won't you? Can't you have his spirit up to-night, and get an excuse for calling on Mary immediately? Come, you understand human nature well enough not to trap yourself; I'll risk it. Have his spirit right up, without delay," he said, putting his thumb to his nose in a very significant manner. "I am so impatient to become acquainted with that girl; she has perfectly bewitched me; I can't think of any thing else, nor talk of any thing else, nor dream of any thing else but her. I shall go stark crazy if I don't get an introduction to her soon." Their plan was immediately put in execution. It was necessary to have the communication come before the whole Circle, for, as you are aware, there are some connected with the Circle who are so deluded as to firmly believe every thing they hear and see, to be true, and it was to blind these that they wished to have the communication come in regular form. There was no difficulty in finding the spirit of Mary's father. The spirit did not tell his name, however, but told with much exactness where his daughter kept a shop to whom he wished his communication conveyed. He wished his daughter to attend their meetings, that he could frequently hold converse with her,

but he did not wish any other one of his family to hear of this communication but Mary. The medium was instructed to warn Mary, as she valued her father's love, not to give the least hint to her family of this wish to communicate with her, for reasons that he would tell her at some future time. The strictest secrecy as to this communication was enjoined on all present, as the spirit said it had some very wonderful revelations to make to his daughter; and for some mysterious cause the communication of these revelations depended on their being kept a secret with those who should hear them. When the medium came out of her trance, "she knew nothing of what she had been talking about" of course: when questioned as to the young lady, Mary, "she had never heard of such a person." The spiritual leader, Mr. Pollock, then told her what the spirit had requested her to do, and for fear she would forget the address of the daughter, he wrote it down on a slip of paper and gave it to Mrs. Moredock. With much apparent reluctance she accepted the task of bearing this communication to its address, as she said it "would undoubtedly subject her to ridicule; but for the cause of truth, and to satisfy the minds of those present, she would consent to undertake this disagreeable task." There was much anxiety expressed by the members of the Circle as to the result of the communication. The initiated, of course, knew that it was a scheme for a new "acquisition," and the deluded were in intense anxiety to learn what new wonder they were about to witness. I could not sleep that night for thinking of Mary Vernon. I once fell in a doze, and I saw her approaching a frightful precipice, with hands and eyes uplifted, appearing to be following an object in the air. She saw not the abyss before her; another step and she would plunge headlong over its

brink. I screamed, jumping from my bed; I trembled with excitement, and a cold perspiration covered me. I dared not close my eyes in sleep again for fear I would see that dreadful vision. I thought it a warning from Heaven. I resolved to go and tell Mary the plot that was being laid for her. After breakfast I did go, resolved to save her, but, finding Mary busy with a customer, I went home. In the afternoon I returned, and as I glanced in the store, I saw Mary at the farther end of the room, with fascinated eyes, riveted on the countenance of the enchantress. Mrs. Moredock was pouring into the ear of the fascinated victim, the seductive words of her art, which she had become so skillful in using. Again I retraced my steps. Circumstances happened to prevent my calling again, and at the next "Circle" the first object that drew my attention was the beautiful Mary Vernon. Oh! it struck a painful crimination to my heart; I felt guilty that I had not warned her, but I resolved to do it yet. Marked attention was paid to her especially by the two that were conspiring together for her ruin. "She 's here; you 're a gem and no mistake," Pollock said to the medium in a low voice, as they went into a back room to concert further operations. I followed them secretly, and heard what they said: "We 've got her now," he continued, "if we only follow up our success. I suppose you 've got the right kind of 'communication' fixed up." "Oh, yes! I scraped acquaintance with a washerwoman, who lives just back of Mary's shop, under the pretense of getting clothes washed, and I learned the whole history of Mary's father, and I have got several of his sayings by heart; and I know things that he did, for this woman washed and sewed for Mary's father for four or five years." "Don't you think

the woman will suspect you for making so many inquiries?" "Did you ever know any one to suspect Mrs. Moredock?" This answer seemed to assure the lecturer, for he gave the medium's hand a very hearty and familiar squeeze. "I will consign her to you to-night if nothing happens," the medium continued. "But with the *dangers* of *navigation* excepted, as I believe shipping men say. If you don't 'deliver the package in like good order, without delay, as per mark in margin,' it will not be my fault. You see I can use commercial as well as spiritual phrases; if you had made out as many false shipping bills as I have for a certain fancy establishment in this city, you could wield their abbreviated slang as well as I can.

"Come let 's go to work; we Spiritualits are consistent in our opposition to the Bible, by working while the night lasts instead of the day." Taking the lecturer by the hand, she approached the door. Just as she put her hand on the knob, she whispered to him in a low voice: "Now, if I help you in securing your prize, remember, you must return the compliment." "You needn't fear that," he assured her, sealing the promise with a kiss on her flabby lips, which penance he did through hopes of future reward. Mary sat in the singular group around her, with contending feelings struggling in her breast. She did not feel satisfied that she was doing right. Notwithstanding the familiarity and compliments the company paid her, she was still and sad; she was thinking of the dear mother she had left without asking her permission; of her sisters and brothers, whom she had deceived with an excuse for her absence this evening. This was the first time she had withheld a thought from her mother, and she felt the painful upbraiding of a reproving conscience. Oh, that first sin!

that first dereliction from duty,—that first step from the right path; what awful consequences does it involve.

The small trivial beginning of error, when the breach is once made, insignificant though it be, how quickly it widens,—how soon are the barriers of virtue washed away by the rushing torrent of sin! How sensitive is conscience, that monitor of the soul, at the first indiscretion! how quick she tells the heart! how persistently she holds up the first blot on the heretofore untarnished sheet! how she implores the erring mortal to wash it out! how earnestly and tearfully she supplicates! Oh, listen to her! Be moved by her tears! Retrace quickly that first wrong step, and thank, with tender gratitude, that guardian angel of thy soul, rejoiced as thou art at thy return! Mary felt that she had sinned; she had suffered herself to be tempted from the path of duty, although the persuasions seemed to have come from a higher than earthly obligations—from her spirit father. But, young woman! whoever thou art, believe not that spirit which tells you to deceive a mother—it is devilish. Hear not the communication that is to be kept from thy mother,—it will bring harm to thee; flee it as you value your peace. Mary was unused to such scenes as this; she had never attended a "Circle" before; she was not accustomed to hear the spirits of the dead talked of with the same indifference as we would speak of an every-day companion: she was shocked at such unnatural familiarity; she could not imagine how people could be so gay and trifling in their talk and actions, when professing to be engaged in such holy inquiries. A "Circle" was soon formed around the table, and as previously arranged, Mrs. Moredock soon rose to her feet, and went through with the twitchings and blinkings supposed to be necessary, in order to become Spiritual-

ized. Mary sat in silent astonishment, when the medium closed her eyes and commenced speaking in a slow, measured voice. When asked by the lecturer what spirit was then in communication with her, and she replied the spirit of Mr. *Vernon*, Mary involuntarily shuddered at the horrid thought; she grasped the table spasmodically with both hands, and gazed spell-bound in the medium's face; her fair form trembling with emotion, and the drops of perspiration starting from her pale forehead. "I would speak to Mary," the spirit continued; "tell her I am happy, and long to see my family here,—but one thought troubles me, it is for you *Mary*, my dearest child." Mary held her breath, at these solemn words. The stream of life seemed stopped in its ruddy course, expectant of some startling revelation. "Mary, snares are being laid for thee. Beware of them! There is a being who will deliver thee from them,—who will protect thee; I commend thee to him; he sits nearest thee; obey him, respect him, and it will be well with thee."

A deadly paleness and relaxation came over the sinking form of the devoted one. The arms of the destroyer bore her from the room. She revived. A carriage was brought. Mary was sent (home?) Did she go alone? Alas, she did not. I reproached myself that I had been so cowardly, so unfeeling as I almost called it, to let that innocent being be thus bound with the subtle cords of her enemies and borne to the slaughter. I intended to have broken the plot to her before this meeting. I intended to have done it before she left the house, but I had delayed, and she was snatched from me; still I hoped it was not too late; Mary appeared to be calm, and self-possessed when she left; and I could not believe that any thing would happen her that night,

although I did not feel perfectly easy, or satisfied; I had seen so much villainy practiced by these devils in human shape, that I shuddered. I resolved that nothing should stop me from doing my duty to my fair sister on the morrow. It should be my first duty in the morning. I would not leave her till I had told her all. Perhaps many will sneer at my solicitude on Mary's account, while I remained in such vile servitude myself; they will ask, Why did you not have some solicitude for yourself? Alas, it was the miserable condition that I was in, that made me feel for those who were yet free, but who were being drawn into the vortex where I had been wrecked; I felt that it was well worth my exertions to save a sister from the world of misery I had endured. I did go the next morning, but I found the neat little glove shop, which was always open before its neighbor's, closed. I heard the wailing of a female voice in the room above,—several persons were standing about the door in anxious conversation. I drew near, and learned that Mary Vernon was missing. Presently the shop door opened, Sarah came out weeping, in extreme distress. "Oh! have you found her!—have you found her! Oh, what shall we do!" her brothers came up at this moment, and with swimming eyes, they sobbed,—"We can't hear any thing of Mary." How my heart smote me, while witnessing this scene of woe; I almost accused myself of being her destroyer. What should I do; I knew not; my heart sank within me; my courage was gone, I left the stricken ones; every inquiry was made after Mary. Sympathizing and active friends,—the police,—the press enlisted heartily in the search for the lost one; but in vain! Guysot took the precaution, as soon as he heard of the excitement that was being raised on account of Mary's disappearance,

to go to all who were present at our last meeting, and enjoin the strictest secrecy on the subject. An incident happened at a certain second class hotel, on the night of Mary's disappearance, to which the police attached some importance, and which revealed the whole of Mary's sad fate to me, as plainly as though I had witnessed it. About one o'clock, on the night of her disappearance, a hack stopped at the door of this hotel,—the driver entered the bar-room with his hat drawn over his eyes, and aroused the porter, saying,—a gentleman with his wife, (who was so feeble he could not leave her) wanted a room immediately. He had just brought them from the cars. The gentleman, with the help of the driver, carried the woman, whose face was covered with a thick handkerchief, to the room, the porter showing the way. The porter said the carriage and the guests smelled strongly of something he had frequently smelled at the drug-store. The woman appeared to be perfectly insensible, uttering a faint groan occasionally as they bore her along. The porter thought it singular that the stranger did not want a physician called. The stranger said, that his wife was subject to such spells; and that she would soon revive. He wished to go on the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad on the morning express, and charged the porter expressly, not to neglect calling him in time. The woman was laid on the bed in the room, and then the stranger went down stairs,—saw the hackman off,—paid his bill at the office, keeping his hat down over his face, and a shawl muffled up closely around his neck, so that the porter nor the clerk could give any description of his countenance. After charging the porter again, not to forget him, he went up stairs. He was awakened at the proper hour. A lady occupied the room adjoining his,

and the raps of the porter awakened her. She was startled by a female voice uttering in tones of fright: "Oh, what is this? where am I?" and then a scream. The lady was in her bed and listened, while a sensation of horror thrilled through her system. "That scream," said she, "was the most heart-piercing burst of agony that I ever heard." A man's voice was trying to calm the agonized one. She faintly heard him say: "Come, we must be off. It is all over with now. It can't be helped. I am sorry for it myself, but we must make the best of it. If we stay here we will be disgraced forever; there is only one way,—to get away as soon as possible." "Oh, my mother! my mother! my mother!" came from that mysterious bed-chamber, in tones that would melt the hardest heart. "I burst into tears," the lady said; "I seemed to feel instinctively, that one of my sex was experiencing the first awakening from the sleep of sin." "Come, we have no time to lose, or we shall be left!—there is the omnibus!" And they left the room.

Shall I attempt to tell of the sufferings of that stricken family! It were vain. No pen can describe them, no heart can feel them, except it has felt them. If we did not know that the ways of God are just, we would be tempted to ask, Why are such afflictions for the virtuous? But still they hoped,—Oh! that gleam of celestial light, brightening our path through life, without which our afflictions would be insupportable,—they hoped they would yet see Mary. The little shop was closed! Many a disappointed eye turned from the barred shutters; many an inquiry was asked of the "pretty glove seller." No more the happy group gathered around the evening table,—every thing was neglected, the mother,—the daughter,—the brothers did nothing

but mourn the absent one, their affliction was preying on them. About two weeks after the disappearance of Mary, in one of the most retired villages of Illinois, an incident happened that quite horrified the quiet little burgh. A beautiful female was found dead in her room at the village tavern,—an empty two ounce vial was lying on the floor, which she had obtained from a doctor's shop the day before filled with laudanum. Her husband was not to be found. On examining her underclothes, they were found marked *Mary Vernon.* Among the first who read this incident in the papers, was the eldest brother, for he had mastered his feelings so as to make continual search and inquiries for his lost sister. He reeled to the floor on reading this, as if taken with some deadly sickness. Kind friends tried to break the cruel news to the mother, but she comprehended it all; she was seized with a convulsion, from which she never revived. She spoke not a word, nor seemed to comprehend what was passing around her. That same night she breathed her last. Sarah is now a lunatic in one of our asylums. She attracts the sympathy of every visitor by her pure, angelic features, ever moved in supplication for "Mary." The smiles that oft disported in joyous radiance over those bright features, have fled,—fled forever. Melancholy, deep, lasting, relieved but by the hope of death fills her shattered mind. The brothers are separated and working for strangers,—with no mother to cherish,—no sister to love. Oh, who can estimate the woe unutterable brought on this one family, once so happy! Can a system that has fellowship with God, bring such misery? What profanity against Heaven, to claim for it a celestial origin! It is earthly,—sensual,—bestial,—devilish. It was born of deception,—baptized in lust, and it leads,—to Hell.

CHAPTER XI.

Honest Believers in Spiritualism. How Mediums are made. Where Spiritual Communications come from. The Credulity of Spiritualists. History of Mr. Levers and his wife. Sincere Believers. How this Delusion changes the Character. The Bible denounced.

As a relief to the deception and villainy which characterized most of the members of our "Circle," there were some who came to the meeting from pure intentions. They were honest in their belief of the doctrines of their sect; they placed the fullest confidence in the mediums' communications; they believed them to be really under spiritual influence; and they have become so deluded, tampering with the forbidden fruit of knowledge, that its poisoning effects can be distinguished in their erratic actions; in their implicit credence of things which appear visionary, absurd, and even ridiculous to others. An impertinent stripling, or superannuated hag with forehead as brazen as the front of Mars, will pour forth a stream of transcendental nonsense, stolen almost word for word from the works of Swedenborg, or some of his copyists, or will pretend to personate some deceased human, in language and commonplace sayings that any person, with eyes open, could do. These deluded, sincere believers in Spiritualism, with open eyes and mouth drink in with avidity all this ridiculous nonsense, and pronounce it wonderful! wonderful!! most wonderful!!! "How can any one see these extraordinary manifestations, and longer doubt their supernatural origin?" And it often appeared to me, that the more silly and commonplace

the pretended manifestations, the more credulous these deluded ones were. I declare, although I have seen and heard all these things,—these inexplicable phenomena,—these table tippings, these knockings, these unknown tongues, these fiddlings and drummings and horn blowings, these disembodied preachings, and all the vaunted doings of the spirits, I have yet to witness a phenomenon that could not be performed by natural means; that could not have originated from natural causes. But, I am wandering from what I intended to say. I intended to tell you the history of a couple of earnest believers in Spiritualism, and the effect that this delusion has had in the disorganization of their minds; the breaking up of old and cherished associations,—the utter destruction of that celestial peace of soul they once possessed.

Mr. *Levers* and his wife were regular attendants at all spiritual meetings. There was no doubt, but that they were sincere believers of what they professed. They had no other motive in devoting themselves to this delusion, but their belief in it. No argument, or unfolding of its deceptions, could waver their faith. Before they became intoxicated with its fascinating mysteries, they were called sensible and pious people. Indeed, they were considered the very pillars of the church to which they belonged.

Mr. Levers spent much of his time in the organization of new churches of his denomination (Baptist), and often was he cramped financially on account of his too liberal donations for church purposes. Many is the splendid structure that had its origin in Mr. Levers' activity and munificence; many the happy congregation that owes its organization to the zeal of this now despised brother; many the eloquent preacher that received his education from the liberality of Mr. Levers; and many the insti-

tution of learning that has been founded and endowed principally by his untiring exertions in the cause of truth and religion. If a church was to be built, Brother Levers was applied to. If any work was to be done, or money raised, Brother Levers was the man. The most ambitious members of the church were perfectly willing that Brother Levers should attend to these duties. Mrs. Levers was the model of what a Christian woman should be—she was intelligent; the deep gleam of her searching black eye was proof of this. She was benevolent—of which the poor around her were grateful witnesses. She was pious—none doubted it. There was a placid serenity in her countenance that told of Heaven-ward thoughts. She was the moving spirit of all female benevolent enterprises, of missionary, educational and sewing societies. All the female members of her church depended on Sister Levers taking the lead in every good cause. She was looked up to as with a sacred respect. Those near her could not but be impressed with a feeling of holy admiration which damped frivolity, and turned the mind to holy thoughts. Such were Mr. and Mrs. Levers; their home was a home for the friendless; a sanctuary for religion, sacred to all virtues. Every morning and evening were the holy Scriptures read with an implicit confidence in their inspiration and their saving efficacy; thrice daily did the fervent prayer ascend from that domestic temple, dedicated to the Most High, for pardon, for grace, for mercy, for blessings on all men. Oh, it was a happy home! God dwelt there. It was but one remove from that perfect home above, to which they looked with the ardent longing of a sanctified heart. But alas! how changed!

Can it be possible that that is Mr. Levers whom you hear jesting with the most sacred doctrines of the Chris-

tian religion! Can it be he that is scoffing at the apostles and their God-leader? The heart shrinks back in icy horror at his blasphemous freedom with holy things! From the champion of religion he has descended to its most virulent calumniator. As formerly, he was not at rest unless engaged in some good work, now,he is not at rest unless battering at the very walls of Zion he helped to raise. No more is his silvered head seen the earliest in the temple of God; no more is his powerful voice heard as a leader among the followers of Christ! As he walks the streets, no hand of fellowship grasps his own with the endearing recognition of "brother;" and at home the melancholy change is more touching. Where is the family altar that burned with holy devotion for two score years! Where is the morning and evening incense of prayer that was wont to ascend to the Most High? Where the Book of God? Banished! That altar in ruins. The censer of prayer cold and corroded. The Book of God dust-covered, and food for the moth.

And that saint-like woman! that model of the Christian virtues! dispenser of charities! she whom the poor called blessed! she with countenance radiant with intellect, and heart overflowing with love! Where is she? At home? yes, at the place which once was home; silent, melancholy, brooding over she knows not what! Her eye dull, or at times flashing with unwonted brilliancy; her cheek pale, emaciated, unchangeably sad. Where is the halo of Heaven that once irradiated that countenance! where the happy smile of internal peace? where the words of comfort that fell from her lips like nectar on the parched and troubled soul? Gone! all gone, and the temple left desolate. The phantoms of a diseased mind now flit silently through its deserted halls.

Does she unite, as of yore, with her sisters in works of love and usefulness? Does she find Heaven in their society? No. She shuns them; she stays at home for fear of meeting them on the street. Is this woman and her husband happy? No. They are in torment; every day to them is a hell. And yet they hug the chains that bind them; they cherish the greedy scorpion that is gnawing at their very souls. What influence has wrought this unhappy change?—Spiritualism; tampering with God's prerogatives; reaching forth to grasp the fire of Heaven before the time. Letting go the anchor of Hope—the Word of God—and drifting, helmless on the chartless waters of speculative futurity!

* * * *

As I was clearing out some papers from a closet yesterday, I noticed a package of letters addressed to Guysot, and mailed from different places in Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. I had the curiosity to open them, and after glancing over their contents, I thought I would send them to you; they are, as you will perceive, from an itinerant Spiritual Lecturer, a Mr. Anson—and his assistant, Miss Jamison, a "trance medium."—From the above-mentioned package, that Matilda sent me, I selected the following letters, as showing in their own words the base deception that these traveling ghost-raisers practice on a too credulous public.

CHAPTER XII.

Selections from a Package of "Confidential Letters" from an Itinerant Spiritual Lecturer, and his Female Medium, to a Spiritual Leader in the city. How the People are humbugged. An account of the Lecturer's Adventures in different country villages. "Astonishes the Natives." How the Spirits of deceased Persons sometimes tell such straight Stories. Interesting Communications from the dead Merchant. A Thief discovered. How a Medium got "Trapped," and how she got out of it. Valuable advice to Spiritual Lecturers. The Fellow who was bound to see a Table moved. What kind of Tables and Rooms Spirits like. Wear and tear of Conscience. Spiritual Fools. A handsome young Widow who wanted a Communication—and got one. The Spiritualist who was starving himself to Death. The Widow whose Husband had visited her after death. Another deranged Spiritualist. A rich Story about a Widower who married his Wife's Sister through the influence of Spiritualism. How the Lecturer was paid. Advantage of carrying a Gold Watch. How Lecturing on Spiritualism develops the creative faculties. How the Lecturer came near losing his Medium, Suse. Villainies of Spiritual Lecturers. Connection of Free-Love with Spiritualism. A not very flattering description of a majority of Spiritualists. Their Motives. Continuation of Matilda's Manuscript.

R———, OHIO, ——.

DEAR CHARLEY:—

And co-worker in the heavenly science of Spiritualism (in a horn). Ha! ha! ha! Aint that rich! I say, Charley; what do you think will become of us poor devils for humbugging the *Dear People* so egregiously? Well, I really didn't think they had such awful gullets. When you told me that the bigger the humbug the easier they would swallow it, I thought you certainly were joking; but I find it no joke. I find wonder-eaters (and these are the ones we are after, you know), like anacondas, are not satisfied at a reasonable mouthful, they

want something that will dislocate the jaws in swallowing. When I first commenced lecturing—lecturing! what a farce! quoting from Swedenborg! jabbering nonsense committed to memory! I confess I don't understand half what I say myself,—when I first commenced lecturing I thought I would temper the blast to the skins of the innocent sheep I intended to shear, but I soon found that this wouldn't do; it made no impression. I commenced blowing harder and harder, and I found, to my astonishment, the harder I blowed the better they stood it; the better it pleased them. We are now having a very interesting, that is, a very profitable time here in this place. By inquiring round I learned the exact history of several deceased persons, well known in the neighborhood; this, as some would consider unimportant knowledge to a medium, I thought best to communicate to *our* medium. It couldn't possibly do her any harm, you know. You'd better believe we "astonished the natives" here by the wonderful revelations from the village churchyard. We have remarkable good success with the spirit of a merchant who died here two or three years ago with the cholera—a man that was well known in the community. By good luck I came across one of his old clerks on the cars, while I was coming here, and I pumped out of him a regular reservoir of "spiritual stock," to commence operations with, and to draw on in case of dearth, or difficulty from other sources. The spirit of this accommodating knight of the yard-stick, has been a perfect "godsend" (excuse this sacrilegious expression). We were supposed to know no more of him than the man that was seen eating cucumbers in the moon. Some of the dead merchant's intimate acquaintances tried to stump us, but we happened to be "posted" on the very

points they were anxious to learn about. It seems that there was a suspicion of the merchant having been robbed, when on his death-bed, by persons in attendance, (some of whom were relatives,) inasmuch as all merchants are supposed to be lined and stuffed with bank bills at all times (a most decidedly wrong impression). We knew that his relatives were rich. Here was a chance to make a grand stroke. We noticed some anxious faces in the audience, when the spirit of the merchant was examined on this point. The spirit answered unhesitatingly that he had some money on hand when he died, but not so much as was generally supposed. He exculpated his rich relations from all suspicion, and said that it was a poor despised woman, who worked as a servant girl, that took the money. "I know who it is; I always thought it," was heard simultaneously in different parts of the room. But we came near having all our glory knocked into a cocked-hat, by a question put by a villainous scamp who knew that women were not very reliable bank-note reporters. He asked Suse, our medium, how many bills there were on a certain bank (naming it) in the merchant's money. I unfortunately happened to be at some distance from her, and she unfortunately was somewhat elated and venturesome, from her remarkable "hits." "I coughed, hemmed and hawed," as much as I dared, to put Suse on her guard, but she was insensible to laryngeal premonitions; out it came—*thirteen bills*. Now I knew, and the rascal who put the question knew, that there was no such bank in existence, at the time of the merchant's death. I hastened to Suse, on pretense of "charging" her more fully (which was verbally, if not mesmerically, most true). I whispered—"say *Atlantic* Bank, New York." I noticed the questioner giggling and whisper-

ing to those near him, to let them know how very sharp he was in entrapping the medium. Drawing his face down to the extent of its elongability, and in a regular circuit-rider's drawl, he repeated the question: "I understand you that there were thirteen bills on the Atlantic Bank, Indiana; now, of what denomination were they?" Suse, having taken the hint, replied, I had no money at all on the *Atlantic* Bank, Indiana, it was on the *Atlantic* Bank, New York. The sharp questioner lost his edge as suddenly as if he had sawed on a nail; and what had liked to have proved our discomfiture, worked to our greatest advantage. A medium should always keep in mind the old saw, "never venture into deep water." When the audience persists in calling up a spirit that the medium knows nothing about, she had better not attempt to answer direct questions. She can go on till she tires her hearers with the legitimate stereotyped spiritual communications, giving lots of good advice, etc., which would be perfectly appropriate, as coming from any spirit, and be sure to keep talking up to the very moment when the spirit leaves her; and she might give the spirit a boost on leaving, so as not to allow time for troublesome questions. In using the feminine gender, while speaking of mediums, I do so from the conviction that none should travel as mediums but females; because more respect is paid them than men; people will submit to being humbugged by a woman with much better grace than by a man. There was one ill-bred hound, though, in the little town of S——, that had no respect for persons or petticoats. He insisted on "seeing something done; he had paid his dime to see something, and he was bound to see something or raise a fuss."

He wanted to see a table move without any one

moving it,—the fool. In vain we told him, and read from Spiritual authorities, that such physical demonstrations can not be shown at will, and on all occasions; that they require a select company, and to be in close proximity to the table, and above all, that *light is decidedly inimical to spiritual physics;* that it requires an uneven floor, and tables of peculiar construction. (Wan't I telling the truth that time?) We told him that the spirits were very particular in their choice of instruments and places; why, we could not tell any more than we could tell why a thousand other phenomena took place, under very singular circumstances. Although we reasoned like a veritable philosopher, this churl would not be satisfied. We offered to give him his dime back again; but the obstinate fellow would not take it. Although I kept a pleasant face, and swallowed the fellow's impertinence; I just wished I had him out doors about two minutes, with a good cudgel in my hand. I'll bet I would have satisfied him with "physical demonstrations." Spiritual lecturers, and sleight-at-hand performers (you know it's all the same) are bothered more with these cabbage-heads, one or two of which they will find in every little town, than with any other inconvenience. They think it is "smart" to interrupt the showman and bother him, knowing that he is greatly in the minority, and can't hurt them. These fellows are almost invariably the most arrant cowards; barking and snarling, wolf-like, only when they have the crowd on their side. I finally got this fellow silenced, by telling him we would endeavor to get up a "Circle" on the following evening, and show him some "table moving what was table moving." On getting home, we found that our arrangements were such as to require our immediate departure; so I fear

the searcher after physical signs was disappointed. But my foolscap is used up, and I must bid you good-by. I see lots of sport in this business, though I get put to my trumps sometimes. Yours in "haste," and we must be in haste with this hobby; we must put him through with whip and spur, and "clucks and bit-jerkings, for he will be entirely stove up in a year or two."

Yours spiritually and confidentially.

PROF. F. ANSON, L. S.

P. S. Did you know I have dubbed myself with a Prof? Please recollect this small item in your superscriptions.

The next letter was dated.

C—— Co.,—— O.

DEAR CHARLEY:—

We are making the thing pay first rate. Good house last night. I am half a notion to raise the price half a dime. Ten cents is too little for singing the same old song night after night; it's got to be rather stale to me; much like the performances of a circus rider to one of the regular hands,—and then the wear and tear of conscience, in gulling the "dear people" with these ghost yarns. A spiritual lecturer has no business with a conscience. If he has that superfluity in his wardrobe, he had best leave it at home, to slip on when he is about laying off that common garment called the "mortal coil." And then the fear a lecturer is constantly in, of being "brought up standing" by some impertinent question! Our medium has however improved wonderfully. She is "up to snuff" with any of them, and she very seldom gets trapped. We have come across several persons in our travels, who have actually become deranged

on this subject. There is no question of it. And it gives me a kind of twinge about the heart occasionally, to think I am helping to prepare others for the mad-house. But then I drive off these unpleasant thoughts, by saying they are fools anyhow, and if they didn't go crazy on this subject, they would on some other. These fools, that are carried away with Spiritualism, are regular bores. They insist on calling on you and expect you to exhibit as much enthusiasm at your private rooms, as you do in the lecture-room. It is exhausting enough, God knows, to keep up appearances in public, without being bored with these fanatics at our lodgings. I wouldn't mind it, if they were all as good company as a young widow that called on us yesterday, to see if she couldn't get a communication from her deceased husband. I told her to call again this afternoon. In the meantime, I have learned all about her history, and if I don't have her most effectually in my power, I never will deliver another spiritual lecture. By-the-way, she would be a star No. 1, in your galaxy of beauty,—oh, excuse me, your "Circle." What do you say? Is your constellation full? She is young, not twenty, brown hair, brilliant eyes and teeth, perfect form, good color, country raised and healthy. I can send her to you, to get *fuller information from the spiritual world*, if you wish. "If you have any occasion," telegraph to me something about the crops. I shall be here three or four days yet. We are going to perform next Sunday evening in the court-house; although some of the "straight backs" have tried to kick up a fuss about it. We find that we can get the use of most any public building, by first sending free tickets to all the directors and their families; and some of them have awful big families. I have noticed several men not thirty years old, with a

"member of the family," for nearly every year of their lives. But it's all right, you know. "Live and let live" is our motto, or you my leave out the *v* if you wish. There is a poor fellow here, who is starving himself to death, from some villainous medium telling him that his mother in the spirit-world, wishes him to do it, as it will be a means of admitting him directly into her sphere when he dies; which will not be long, I imagine, as the fellow is so weak now, that he can't stand alone. I say, Charley, are you a believer in the new doctrine of our sect, that deceased husbands can visit carnally their living consorts? I am (of course, I am). I have come across a verification of this doctrine in the case of a certain widow Brown (?) whose husband was supposed to have left this world some fifteen months ago. But it appears "he's round" somewhere yet. They sent a poor devil off to the lunatic asylum from a little town about ten miles from here, last week. He was green enough to believe a medium, that got up an awful yarn on the credit of his father's spirit.

About the richest thing I've seen, since leaving the Queen city I have not told you yet. It's too good to keep.

When we were at M——, an old codger, about fifty, came to us at our rooms, and taking me one side, told me he wanted a little confidential talk. Now says he: "I know this Spiritualism is all a humbug, and so do you." I immediately stood on my dignity, of course, as I should have done. I asked him rather indignantly what he meant. He immediately put his finger to his nose, performing certain gyratory movements, the meaning of which everybody knows, saying, "Now, don't take on. I know it all. I am a Spiritualist, one of the right kind; one that makes capital out of it; and I promise to make capital out of it for you, if you

will favor me in a small matter." At this I rather subsided a little from my exalted position. Says he, "I am a widower; my wife has been dead three months; I am tired of this 'single blessedness,' as they call it. I call it single cursedness. I want to marry my wife's sister. She's a splendid girl,—only seventeen,—and beside, to tell you the truth; I've run through with my wife's portion, and if I can't get another portion soon I'm a 'goner,' so far as dollars and cents are concerned. Now this younger sister and her parents have scruples about a man marrying his wife's sister; and the young minister of their church (Presbyterian), the meddlesome puppy, has told them it is not orthodox. I believe the scamp wants to get the girl himself, or he wouldn't take such particular pains to instruct them on this particular doctrine, for he is at no great pains to instruct them on any other. They were at your meeting night before last, and were considerably staggered at the communication from the spirit of Mr. ——, (by the way, who posted you up so well)!" I think, sir, you joke rather too freely; we remarked (not thinking it necessary to get mad about it). "Now, sir, I want to tell you all about my wife's history. Then I want you to get up a private Circle, to which this girl and her mother will be invited. I want you to have my wife's spirit up (not in the way she used to get it up herself though, for that would knock all our calculations on the head). I want you and your medium, to fix up a communication expressing her desire that I should marry her younger sister;—you understand what I want. I have got a gold watch worth a hundred and fifty dollars; it is yours the day I marry that girl."

By attentively studying the rascal while he was talking, I was convinced that he was in earnest, and that

there would be no risk in entering into the arrangement, for he would be very clear of breaking his own head by divulging the matter. I asked to see the watch, not thinking it necessary to stand on my dignity any longer. The idea of flourishing a gold watch, was quite a temptation, I assure you; for our finances have not risen to the gold watch point yet. I did carry a galvanized one on special occasions, till the gilding began to wear off. You know that a man can not be any thing now-a-days without a gold watch. It is indispensable. It is an "open sesame" to a thousand recognitions; you don't know its magic power, because you were never without one. Try the experiment. Ride in an omnibus or car, or mix in any public assembly, displaying an old "Bull's Eye" occasionally,—people will shun you as they would a leper.

I tell you, Charley, using a threadbare expression, a gold watch is a "great institution." Well, he took the watch from his pocket and handed it to me. It was a splendid time-piece. It was well worth its cost; but it had "Maria" engraved on the back of it. "What is this," said I. "Oh! It's only my wife's first name. Any silversmith can make that all right." I did not exactly like this "Maria." Although I left my conscience at home, as I have recommended all other spiritual lecturers to do, still, some such thing as this will slightly prog me yet; however, we struck a bargain, I insisting on his letting me have the watch in my possession; for, I thought, if he was mean enough to delude a woman, in the manner he proposed, he was mean enough to keep the watch, or to commit any other crime (don't "consider me in," for you know, I am only "following my legitimate profession," as the lawyers say).

We maneuvered up the "Circle," just as we wished.

The widower, of course, was not there. Every thing worked to our satisfaction. It would be interesting to tell you all the particulars, but I haven't time. We saw them married; and I am now carrying the gold watch in my pocket,—though you needn't tell Mrs. —— who keeps a boarding-house on —— street, for I believe she is "posted," on law, enough to know that it does not consider gold watches indispensable articles in a gentleman's wardrobe. To be sure, I might go in for the "higher law" of public opinion, but I have no curiosity to try legal experiments at present. I can make spiritual experiments pay much better. I've got a gold watch then. I feel one step more elevated in society; but I don't like that "Maria" staring me in the face every time I take it out (which is pretty often; you know that my appointments are such that I must needs know the exact minute). That "Maria" must come off at the first silversmith's shop. It has caused me to tell one lie already (which, you know, is quite mortifying). One of your regular long-nosed blue stockings, that are eternally thrusting said nose into you, would know who "Maria" was. I told her Maria was a beautiful young lady I saved from drowning; and this was a small memento which she obliged me to accept. Wasn't that a "pretty good one?" I have got so I can tell some "pretty good ones," not to say "whappers." This Spiritual Lecturing is great for developing the enlarging and creative faculties. Ha! ha! ha! Charley, you must burn up my letters as soon as you've read them, lest they fall into the hands of the Gentiles.

Suse sends her love to you. By-the-way, I was afraid of losing Suse, last week. An addle-headed old fool, who wasn't any too smart before Spiritualism got hold of him, became perfectly crazy after "Suse." He is rich,

and hasn't any children;—won't live very long: it was a strong temptation. I used all the persuasion I was master of to dissuade her, but she hung down her head and said nothing;—just as a woman does when she is bound to have her own way.

I changed my tactics, threatening to "show her up to the old codger" (and I only had to tell the truth to do that); this worked like a charm; so I packed up and left town while she was in the humor.

Good-by. Yours, spiritually,

PROF. F. ANSON, L. S.

The other letters from different places, in which Anson and his Suse had performed, were full of such serious tricks they had played off on credulous humanity. "Bores," as he styled them, or those half-cracked believers, appeared to be his abhorrence. From these confidential letters of an operator in the shadowy science, it would seem, that in almost every place he visited, Spiritualism was used as a cloak for covering the most wicked intentions. Of course, he became intimately acquainted with the moving spirits (with a corporeal connection) of each Circle he visited, and these letters showed up their consummate villainy just as it was. He related many cases of seduction; speaking of them in a trifling, jocose manner, that would shock the sensibilities of any but the most abandoned. It appeared that the Free-Love philosophy had engrafted itself on almost every spiritual stock he came in contact with; and the cases of husbands abandoning wives and children; and of wives leaving their husbands, through the influence of this damning delusion, were truly pitiable and humiliating to our ideas of conjugal fidelity.

A majority of the ringleaders of these spiritual cliques

were old worn-out vessels of both sexes, whose capacity for retaining the juices of life had long since been lost, but who persisted in nursing the delusion that they were yet new, in spite of worn-out teeth, cheeks abraded of youthful paint, tops and bottoms used up, and sides sunken in. Instead of laying aside youthful manners, and adopting the quiet, resigned manners becoming age, they disgust the sensible by endeavoring to retain the frost-bitten and withered leaves of a departed summer. Not being able to appear attractive, and thus gratify their morbid taste for fruits out of season in ordinary healthy society, they greedily take up with this Spiritualism, which so blinds the eye of the affections, which so distorts the images of the heart, that their wrinkles, and snags, and sunken cheeks, and shining pates are lost sight of in the all-absorbing spirituality of Spiritualism. It is an extinguishing of the light which makes all of a color.

The practical application of this principle in "physical demonstrations," is but an emblem of the soul of the whole system. An extinguishing of the lights, a shutting of the eyes, an ignoring of the senses; no wonder that fevered dry bones rush to this fountain to quench their burning thirst; no wonder that wrinkled faces, not satisfied with their wrinkles, look into this glass, that by some spirituo-optical delusion, puffs out those wrinkles; no wonder that yellow complexions come to this flattering artist, that gives to their leathern cheeks the freshness of budding virginity. It is an asylum, or rather an earthly elysium, for all worn-out and stale humanity; a bower of oblivion to all imperfections. A green pasture for hide-bound and unshed staggerers. A hope for the despairing. If such withered and dried-up cases alone entered this asylum, it

would be well. If bones only rattled against bones, and leathery cheeks creaked against leathery cheeks, there would be no harm in it, perhaps; indeed, it would be a desideratum to society; a hospital, in which would be collected its diseased members, thus ridding it of their contagious afflictions; but the really young, and beautiful, and innocent,—the warm hearted are seduced within the shadowy gates of this mystic garden. Their vision is changed; the serpent, ever present as of old, leads them through the ambrosial bowers, to the tree of Life. They are enchanted with its beauty; they long for its golden fruits. Their seducer is eloquent in its praise,—of its conferring immortal youth, omniscience and heavenly bliss on all who eat of it;—enraptured they partake. The destroyer's work is done; he leaves them for others, who wait his attendance. * * * * *

Matilda's manuscript contained several other cases of mournful interest,—of want, abandonment, despair, madness, self-murder, loss of virtue and honor brought on unhappy victims by these hell-born monsters, aliased, "Spiritualism" and "Free-Love." The limits of this work, and the atrocity of some of the crimes there related, forbid the introduction of more of the sad cases she recorded.

CHAPTER XIII.

Matilda sees an Advertisement in reference to her Parentage. The Lost Child. Mysteries of a City Post-office. Parents found. Going Home. A trip to the North with Matilda and Henriette. An intelligent Schoolmaster. An interesting Society of Spiritualists in Northwestern Ohio. The Schoolmaster gives an account of their doings. The Shoemaker whose Wife "rapped" herself to death. The rapping Bricklayer, and how he got his second Wife by the aid of Spiritualism. A "Prescribing Medium." Spiritual Medicine. Remarkable Spiritual Practice. Diarrheas, Toothaches and fresh Cuts cured. A very ludicrous description of a Country Landlord, who dealt in Spiritual Elixirs. A laughable scene, in which the Landlord gets "overhauled." A Country "Dicker." A Child killed by Spiritual Medicine.

ABOUT a week after the departure of Mr. and Mrs. Beaumont, I received a note from Matilda, requesting me to call without delay. She met me at the door with "I am glad to see you." The sincerity of which expression was fully indorsed by the pleased anxiety of her looks. She had a newspaper in her hand, and immediately referred me to an advertisement, which read as follows: "Information wanted of Matilda De Long, whom her parents supposed to be dead; but they heard of her about a year ago, by the reading, in a Baltimore paper, the advertisement of her adopted parents in reference to her sudden departure from them; since which nothing has been heard from her. Any information concerning her will be most thankfully received by her afflicted parents. Address

EZRA DE LONG, —— Ohio.

"I have found my parents! Oh, I have a mother! How joyful, how happy I am! God is too good to me!

A mother, a mother, I have a mother! I want to go to her immediately," were some of Matilda's exclamations while I was reading the advertisement. I read the article, and re-read it. Although it was in a spiritual paper, I hoped it was all right; and yet, a dark suspicion arose in my mind that this, though so plausible, might be a new plot, laid to involve her in other difficulties. I advised her to write to her supposed parents before going there. She was so confident with hope, that she could hardly bear to think of such a delay. The news was so good that she could not think of disappointment. She concluded, however, to follow my advice. Time passed slowly and drearily away, while she was waiting for an answer. The second day had scarcely passed, before she was running to the Post-office every three or four hours. I never could go there without meeting her. What a school is the Post-office to study the occupations, hopes and anxieties of humanity! The business-man goes there in the morning with a burden resting on his mind of loans to be paid *this day*, greater than he has money to discharge. Hoping to receive remittances by mail to make up the deficiency; with what a searching, anxious glance he looks in his box,—with what a nervous grasp he takes his letters and feels of them, hardly daring to break the seal. His skillful touch can detect those containing money: with an excitement that none but a business-man can feel, he tears open the envelop and first learns if it contains *money*, and how much, reserving the other contents to be read at leisure. An empty letter with, perhaps, the signature of a creditor, gives a gloomy appearance to his countenance; while a "fat" letter causes his face to shine with gladness.

At the general delivery department, more particu-

larly where the human family is divided off into "A's to H's, I's to Q's, and R's to Z's," can be seen all varieties of the species *homo*, with countenances moved by every variety of emotion. They wear, however, a troubled, anxious appearance generally; hope and gloomy anticipation commingled, prevailing, rather than certain joy,—indicating that we oftener expect to hear bad news than good. Here we meet with young men from the country, anxiously expecting letters from the "old man," on whose purse they are still depending. Middle aged women, with a nervous anxiety inquire for Mrs. ——, hoping to hear from their absent husbands. And when the clerk carelessly fumbles over the letters, her eyes riveted on the remaining ones, as on a last hope, and when he comes to the last letter, and puts them all up without handing her one, with what downcast eye and sunken heart she turns from what was to her the temple of hope!

Day after day, with revived hope, she enters the office, and as often turns away disappointed. The clerks get to consider these anxious women "bores," and tell them that there is nothing for them, without looking; they go away dissatisfied, thinking that there surely must be a letter.

And how the contents of letters are greedily devoured before leaving the doors of the office! I have seen exiles from the Emerald Isle, and from the "Fatherland," weep over these bits of scribbled paper. What joy, what grief, do these insignificant scraps convey!

Day after day did Matilda besiege the "From A's to H's," till the clerks "really wished a letter would come for her;" and some of the heartless fellows proposed writing one, to get rid of her. Alas! they could not appreciate her motives for thus besieging them;

let them hope to find a mother in a letter, and they will not wonder at her anxiety.

At last a letter came. She broke it open on the spot, and read, "Our dear, long-lost child! come to us quickly. We know you are our child: your letter removes all doubt. The way we came to lose you, was this: We were living in New York, about twenty years ago, barely earning enough to keep us from day to day, when sickness came on us. We were all taken to the hospital. The directors advised us to part with our child. You were then six months old. Subdued by disease and want, and not in our right minds, we consented. An apparently kind and benevolent gentleman and lady took you from us, and promised to rear you as their own child. When we recovered from our sickness, we searched for you long and diligently, hoping to get you back, for without "our Matilda," we had no earthly treasure. But our search was fruitless. By accident, about a year ago, we read an advertisement for one Matilda De Long, corresponding as to age and color of hair and eyes with our long-lost child. Since then we have spent all our earnings in advertising for you. But if we can once more clasp our beloved child in our arms, it will more than repay us for the long years of anxiety and trouble we have experienced on her account. We would come after you, but our means are exhausted. We have a few acres and a rude cabin in these gloomy woods; but, with our child with us, it will be a paradise,—our cabin a temple of joy. We shall look anxiously for you, our dearest Matilda. May we not have to endure many dreary hours till we fold you to our bosom.

From your happiest parents

EZRA and SUSAN DE LONG."

Matilda commenced reading the letter to me, but was so overcome with emotions of joy, that she could not proceed, but handing it to me, broke out in sobs. I did not know what to think; it seemed strange; it seemed plausible, and yet I could not drive away that dark suspicion that lurked in the background. There was no use in my advising her what to do; I saw that plainly: she was resolved to go, and I don't know as I could have advised her to do differently.

"But what will you do with Henriette?" I asked.

"Oh, she will have to go home. I love the dear girl as a sister. I hate to part with her; but we must part.—My mother! I have a mother! The ties that bind me to her, should be stronger than any other. Henriette insists on accompanying me to the wretched home of my parents; but this, you know, is not to be thought of."

At this moment, Henriette entered the room and sat down by the side of Matilda.

"You will take me with you?" she said, throwing her arms around Matilda's neck, her swimming eyes looking beseechingly in her protectress' face.

"Henriette, my dear child, it will not do. It would be very wrong for me to take you where I am going, though nothing grieves me more than to part with you." With painful feelings and streaming eyes, Matilda said these words,—embracing, tenderly, her fair charge.

"Oh, I can not leave you!" Henriette exclaimed. "You are a mother to me, and I love you as you do your mother. Let me go with you, and we will take your father and mother with us to my home. My father is rich enough to keep us all: it will be his greatest pleasure to do so, if it be my wish. We have money enough to take all of us there. Come, dearest

Matilda, and then we shall never part. Will you not say Yes? It would be cruel to refuse me. I feel as if I can not live away from you."

"Oh, what shall I do?" Matilda exclaimed. This new hope is also shrouded with sorrow. I advised her to comply with Henriette's request. "I think that her plan, of taking you and your parents to her father's plantation, a good one for you all, and I have no doubt that her father would be much pleased with it, and would give you employment and a home. Take Henriette along, and I will write to her father; and I think it will be best to tell him the whole truth; he will then be led to believe as I do, that there is a good Providence in the direction of these circumstances."

It was finally arranged in this manner, and I had to consent to accompany them. In twenty-four hours afterward, we were rolling toward Toledo, and the next morning we arrived at ——, a station on the "Air-line" road running west from Toledo. This station was the nearest station to the residence of Matilda's parents.

By accident, or good luck, I inquired of a well-dressed young man, who happened to be passing the tavern door, if he knew a Mr. De Long near that place. He told me that a Spiritualist, by that name, lived about three miles distant, "and a very singular character he is, too," he continued.—By a little persuasion, he gave me a full history of this individual. He said that De Long, and the clique of Spiritualists with which he was connected, were in rather bad odor in that community: they were not only accused of practicing base deception, but even of crime. He told me of an incident that had just happened, that was the talk of the whole country: A shoemaker, by the name of

Martin, had a family of small children, and a nervous wife. His wife got to "rapping," and actually rapped herself to death. Every night before this sad event, the shoemaker's house was filled with the loungers, the wonder-lovers, the grass and *bona fide* widows, the not-mated and unmated elders of the other sex, to see and hear the shoemaker's wife—"rap." And "rap" she did, loud enough to be heard "all over town," (said "all over town" did not comprehend a very large space, be it understood). It was laughable to see the honest shoemaker sit with solemn face, the very impersonation of sincerity, while the rappings were going on, and hear him interrogate the spirit and request it to "deal gently with Sally Maria." There was no doubt but that Sally Maria's nervous system was wrought up to an intense excitement at such times, which was nothing extraordinary, considering she was one of those nervous, hysterical women, that are found in every community. There is no doubt but that Sally Maria and her waxed-end consort were sincere in believing they were actually dealt with by spirits, else Sally Maria would not have pounded herself to death, and left the poor cordwainer as disconsolate as one of his own No. X's, without its mate. The spirits which had so afflicted him, however, came to his relief, in the tangible shape of a model of spinstership; very staid, very matronly, very nervous on special occasions, very talkative sometimes, very skilled in catnips and tanzies, not very beautiful, especially when her mouth was open. She could rap, too, which was a great desideratum with the shoemaker,—worth more to him than all the ivory on the Negro Coast. They were duly sewed together, whether with the classic silken tie or with one of the cobbler's own waxed ends, the young man did not tell.

The rapping qualities of his last mate did not come up to what the operator in soles thought his deceased Sally Maria's were; and he unfortunately so expressed himself, one day, while engaged in the unspiritual occupation of new-heeling an old brogan. He soon had reason to change his mind, however, for the left gaiter, No. 2, commenced a miscellaneous and unmitigated rapping on the poor fellow's brain-table, and if it had been as resonant as the one his dear Sally Maria pounded to pieces, the raps might have been heard to the cobbler's satisfaction. Through the mediation (spiritually speaking) of this gaiter No. 2, another connubial seam has been sewed. A long bricklayer, by the name of Rapp (singular coincidence of name with subject under consideration) had another nervous wife, and he lost her also, as most other men do the same article. It was dry rapping with Rapp, as he rapped on his bricks with no Mrs. Rapp at home to wrap up his trowel and dinner for him. And then, the little Rapps had no one to wrap up their hair and their sore fingers. If ever a house should echo to a rap, it was Rapp's house. Although Rapp was, hydrostatically speaking, rather a dry rap of a Rapp, he went in for a moist, not to say succulent rap, to take the place of his silent Rapp. He came across such a one, and fairly "rapped" her into a Mrs. Rapp.

The "schoolmaster," (this was the name the young man went by), told me the details of the whole process; but they would not be very proper to be introduced here. It was a second edition of Anson's gold watch-case, although not so scientifically, that is, so confidentially managed,—which caused the entire cat to get out of the bag,—but not until the succulent Mrs. Rapp, No. 2 got in, and was fairly "bagged" All the gossip

mills in the neighborhood are now grinding this grist. The "bagged" Rapp gets the moisture ground out of her, in the scandal mills, without mercy, while the dried up old Rapp puts his trowel to his nose and tells them to "grind away."

The young man seemed to be in rather a humorous vein, in telling his story. I have written it down in his own language, as near as I could recollect. He told me several other laughable and serious anecdotes about the phantom society; but they bore a family resemblance to some already related in this narrative, and it would not be interesting, perhaps, to repeat them. There is one, however, that I will intrude on the reader, inasmuch as the narrator illustrated it in the bar-room of the tavern we were putting up at.

One of the mediums of the society was a "prescribing medium." He was an ignorant fellow, afflicted with a lobelia and cayenne weakness. A treatise on "Doctoring by Steam," having unfortunately fallen into his hands some years before, quite decomposed his already addled brain, so that he could do nothing except by steam, cayenne or lobelia. These were the three moving powers in his code of physics. The world, in the first place, was an emanation from steam. The sun was a huge globular cayenne-pod, and every terrestrial eruption was the effect of intestine lobelia; all human ailments were from deficiency of heat; and if they could not be removed by steam, lobelia or cayenne, there was no use in trying any thing else. To confirm this "natural doctor" in his thermal theory, the spirits condescended to have direct communication with him. I don't mean the spirits with which he made his tinctures of cayenne, but those disembodied spirits, which are supposed still to retain a sufficient amount of physical force to

move tables, providing the tables are of seasoned wood and of the right material and construction, etc. Said disembodied spirits told Thomson No 10, that he was "some peppers" in the healing art; that Dr. Rush wasn't a rushlight compared with this great luminary. The spirits told him that he had (like every other biped in these days), "a mission to perform;" that he must not only speak boldly, but steam boldly and cayenne boldly, and lobelia boldly. The spirits told Thomson, though not in these words, probably, that he must "pitch in" to disease in general; not to hesitate or take thought what he should prescribe, but to give whatever came to his tongue first; which, of course, would be one of the moving powers.

One man was steamed for a fresh cut; another was vomited for a thorn in his toe; and one poor fellow, with the flux, fell a martyr to a cayenne enema. This Æsculapian medium had prepared some medicines from spiritual recipes, which he left put up in two-ounce vials, with the landlord, to sell at the very moderate price of one dollar per vial; twenty-five cents of which went to the landlord, in consideration of his humanity in placing this boon within the reach of mortals. Having told the young man that I was somewhat acquainted with drugs, he called the landlord to let me examine the medicine; first, however, cautioning me against putting any confidence in him; warning me not to leave any valuables in his charge, unless we wished them to remain in his charge an indefinite period; and he advised me to make a bargain for my fare beforehand, unless we had a mint to draw on. I had formed such an opinion of the landlord, from his officiousness at the station in getting us to come to the "Metropolitan." He ran down the other establishment, in a manner,

showing he was accustomed to doing it. Among other arguments (and it was a moving one, we were bound to admit) he intimated that the "Dutch landlord," as he was particular in calling him, not only bled his customers by his bills of fare and his bills of items, but by his *bed bills*.

Although "scamp" was stamped on the old fellow's wrinkled brow, as plainly as it ever was on Cain's, still, at the sound of *bed-bills* we capitulated, and walked to the Metropolitan, "mine host" leading the way, and standing on the "snake heads," in the plank sidewalk, till the ladies stepped over. Our trunks were brought upon a wheelbarrow by two of the landlord's progeny. The biggest one working in the shafts, and the younger one in the rope traces before the vehicle. As we passed the rival hotel (labeled the "Occidental," in rather questionable typography, which the landlord interpreted "Dutch Hole"), our guide, who was teaching us the art of "walking the plank," became confusedly verbose,—he had been talkative before. The disturbing force which caused these increased and irregular lingual oscillations we soon discovered. A little boy, with a Teutonian accent, and a young lady, not so bad looking nor so shabbily dressed, who spoke pure and impure English at the same time, sallied from the hall of the "Occidental," and opened a regular battery of grape, canister, chained shot, rusty nails, and every imaginable missile known to vocal artillery. Boniface was fairly raked fore and aft. He was riddled with word shot from jib-boom to rudder. Among the shots which seemed to make the old fellow shrug his shoulders, and most to disconcert his tongue, were some such irregular customers as these, "You old thief! you old villain! What 's that you've been lying about me, you dirty

old ——. Where 's that traveler's money, that put up with you the other night?—You old liar! You old devil, you!" And here the little Teutonian got so hot that it was dangerous for him to shoot any more till he was swabbed out. Never was a man more loaded down with degrees and masterships than this modest professor of "entertainment for man and beast." And the devoted wheelbarrow, with its "Metropolitan" terminations, fared worse, if any thing, in passing the battery than the proprietor himself. "There goes ——'s fools! Oh, what a yoke of calves! Say, calfy, bawl a little, won't you?" The bigger calf, that worked in the shafts, set down the barrow, and showed his butting propensities. We expected nothing short of a catastrophe; but the father of the calves ordered the baggage car to "come along," and we finally got into harbor, that is, into the drawing-room of the Metropolitan,—"drawing" in two respects, being separated from the kitchen by drawing doors, and being decorated, as to its walls, with drawings of "Eliza" and "Sally Ann." But I have wandered from my subject, which was the spiritual medicine above-mentioned, done up in spirits and confined in two-ounce vials. Boniface was earnest and loud in his recommendations of the Spiritual Drops, and most particularly of the "Elixir of Life."

It was a rare treat to the student of Physiognomy to watch the old fellow's face while praising the medicine. The old saw that "butter wouldn't have melted in his mouth," would be tame as expressing the extreme gravity of his countenance. The muscles of expression were contracted a little too much for a close view. The face would have personified sincerity well enough, if seen at a distance; for instance, it would have made a very good model for a figure-head in stone, to adorn

a fantastic window-sill or cornice. Like the bold figures of Michael Angelo, the deep strokes would not bear close inspection. It was well calculated however, to pass current with the "*Haversacks*" from the "bush," in convincing them that said Elixir of Life, etc., would cure all head, and tooth, and belly-aches; would "knock," the "ager," and was "good for worms." The honest Dutchman likes very strong expressions, as well as very strong colors and very strong cheese. When the tavern-keeper told him, in that excessively honest voice of his, and with that indescribable face I have just been hinting at, that this bottle of Elixir would do all these things, and with a very penetrating, perhaps slightly prying eye, looked down into the Dutchman's elm-bark basket, and suggested that he would confer on him ("being he was a neighbor,") this inestimable blessing for the paltry sum of ten dozen of eggs, four pounds of butter and six chickens; the emanation from "Fadder Land," with saturn-ringed eyes and sucker mouth, "caved;" (I dont know of a more polite word expressing the idea, although, I might have said the above-named emanation made a sale, including himself). It was with one of these elongated looks, almost painful to an anatomist, who knows what extreme tension certain muscles are then undergoing, that the landlord commenced eulogizing his ware. We proposed tasting, which he consented to;—we suggested the possibility of red peppers growing in the spirit-land. Oh no! no! no!—no red peppers about that! no red peppers about that! you're mistaken, sir. Nobody knows what it's made of. Finding we preferred arguing to purchasing, he put up his vials and abbreviated his face; which abbreviation was rather accelerated by a man driving up with a load of hay.

"You told me to bring you a load of hay."

"Oh yes; yes, yes; drive right to the barn and unload, I'm very busy, now. Halloo! Jer-e-mi-ah! Jer-e-mi-ah! Jeremiah! Mother, where's Jeremiah? Never here when I want 'im. Drive right along!—right along! my boy'ill be there in a minute, to help you unload;" and the tavern-keeper flew round the house like a scared cat in a tinshop. But the farmer didn't "drive right along," as *per* request; but asked this very common-sense question:

"Say, how is it about the pay? You know I never got pay for that other load yet; and I'd jest as lief you'd pay before I unload."

"Oh! that'll all be right! that'll all be right! drive right along." But still Linsey didn't "drive right along;" and Boniface flew round the more and commenced scratching his head. Coming up to us as smiling as a bouquet in January, he "wondered if he couldn't get the loan of five dollars for half an hour, till he could get a "big bill" changed.

We intimated our willingness to act the accommodating and the broker in this case, inasmuch as we preferred larger bills. This brought on a hacking cough, which we had not heretofore noticed in our host; he went out to clear his throat and disappeared round the corner of the house. The man who "didn't drive right along," concluded to do so after a while, but not in the direction of the "Metropolitan stables."

This "prescribing medium," the young man told us, was doing much harm by the reckless manner in which he was heating up and convulsing physical humanity. Several in the neighborhood had already fallen victims to one or more of his motive powers. A young mother "doing well," was induced to use some of his tinctures,

by a special communication; a fever and inflammation were the consequence; and finally the husband, with his infant child, followed her to the grave.

A little child that had swallowed some lye, producing inflammation of the throat and stomach, was murdered by inhuman doses of cayenne, to "raise the heat." The little innocent would struggle and scream in its agony, as its tormentors forced the liquid fire down its throat. Oh! what crimes against nature is this demon of deluslon guilty of! How many mortals have been sacrificed on its reeking altars! When will men be governed by reason, and banish these wild phantoms from their mind!

During our sojourn at the "Metropolitan," we all became deeply interested in our young acquaintance. He seemed to take all of us by storm, with his sparkling wit,—his general intelligence,—his manly bearing, and his nobleness of heart. If ever the spirits had any thing to do with human affairs, they had a hand in sending this young man to us just at that time.

CHAPTER XIV.

Dark Suspicions. An important charge given to Davison, the Schoolmaster. Traveling in a new country. Life in the Backwoods. A First Settler. Arrive at "Home." Domestic Scene. Farewell. Davison gives a history of Himself. A Noble Man.

After hearing the schoolmaster's account of the Spiritualists in the neighborhood, dark suspicions arose in my mind. Yet still it may all be right, I persisted in trying to make myself believe. I could not bear the thought of Matilda's hopes of a happy home being blasted. Mr.

Davison, for that was the schoolmaster's name, so won my confidence by his manly bearing, that it occurred to me to acquaint him with the history of my charges, and to place them under his protection, while they remained there.

I was perfectly convinced, by this short interview, that he was a virtuous and honorable man, in whom the utmost confidence could be placed. He sat wholly absorbed with interest, while I recounted to him the foregoing narrative. He readily accepted the task (though modestly pleading his unworthiness) of serving and protecting the ladies, to the best of his abilities. I immediately introduced him to them. I noticed a blush and a marked agitation as he glanced at Henriette; and no wonder, for a sensitive, pure nature like his could not behold such a beautiful being, so chaste, so modest, so confiding, without being fascinated with her radiant beauty. We hired a two-horse wagon in the afternoon and started for the cabin in the woods. The roads were just thawing out, and such a way of getting along it did seem to me that man nor beast ever experienced before. The horses would go a few steps, and then down they would plunge through the crust, up to their knees. Oh! this is nothing, our John cried. If you had lived in these woods as long as I have you would be used to it. It was a gloomy road, through a perfectly flat country; not even the trees were cut out of the track, but were merely girdled and left to slowly rot and fall. We passed, perhaps, half a dozen cabins on our way, around which were from five to ten acres of land, partially cleared. Nothing was to be seen about these rude houses but a few corn-stalks, a cow, and, perhaps, a yoke of working cattle; before the door, a few logs, with an ax, and an armful or two of wood prepared for

the fire-place. As we jogged along past them, a hound or two would stick his head from under the floor, and bark savagely at us; then the door would partially open, exposing an interesting family group of the "old man" in "wamus;" the old woman, split broom in hand, and from six to a dozen offshoots from the above parental stock, ranging in altitude at regular intervals of about two years' growth. Judging from their tonsorial coverings, one would form the idea that few knights of the scissors ranged in "these diggins." But few words passed between us. This was a country, and a way of traveling, so new and unprepossessing to us all, that the shades of the tall trees seemed to cast a shade over our spirits. Our driver finally jolted over a pile of rails, and hauled up to a cabin, with a rude porch in front, under which were stored old flour and pork barrels, and all sorts of household rubbish. Matilda's heart seemed to sink within her; her hand trembled violently, as I helped her from the wagon, and her face turned deathly pale. Henriette, poor girl, knew not what to say or think; this was something so different from what she had ever experienced. We rapped at the door; it was opened by a tall, lank man, apparently about fifty, dressed in linsey pants and wamus. A dried up woman, of about the same age, was his sole companion. "Oh, this is Matilda," she exclaimed, glancing from one of the ladies to the other, in apparent uncertainty. Matilda sank, overcome, on a rough chair: then the dried up woman, inspired with a sudden confidence, fell on her neck, exclaiming, "My child! my child!" I left the room, with my new acquaintance, the schoolmaster, for we did not wish to dampen by our presence, the exuberance of their joy. I made him promise, again, that he would protect these ladies,

and keep them from difficulties, telling him that I did not feel satisfied that all was right, although I had no positive evidence to the contrary. We entered the room again. I was almost afraid to look at Matilda, for fear I would read a disappointment of her hopes.

Mr. and Mrs. De Long appeared overjoyed; and as to Matilda, she seemed to be in a new existence that she could hardly appreciate. She knew a father and mother for the first time in her life! I told them that I must bid them good-by, for it was necessary to be off, in order to take the evening train. Never was a farewell more painful to me; never fuller of gloomy forebodings. I told Matilda and Henriette that, inasmuch as they would need more attention than Mr. De Long could spare time to give, I would leave them partly in the care of Mr. Davison. I noticed a scowl on De Long's countenance, as I said this, which it was difficult for him to repress. A glance of disapprobation also darted from the eye of his wife. They quickly corrected themselves, however, and pressed me to stay to tea. Matilda promised to write often, and Henriette to put in a line with her. I pressed on them the propriety of making the arrangements we had decided on (of going to Henriette's home), and to carry them out as soon as possible.

When I took their hand to say good-by, they both burst into tears. "Oh! we never can repay you, sir, for your trouble," Matilda sobbed.

I assured them that I had already been fully compensated, in the consciousness of doing my duty.

I should remark, that De Long and his wife seemed at a loss to account for Henriette's coming with Matilda. At least, I imagine they showed this in their actions and looks.

While I was waiting at the "Metropolitan" for the cars, my young friend Davison gave me, at my solicitation, a sketch of his life, for it was strange to me that one as favored by nature and education as he appeared to be, should be spending the best of his days in a country and society so uncongenial to his tastes.

"I was," says he "twenty-one years old, last February. I have no relatives in this State, none nearer than the State of New York. Seven years ago, my father was a prosperous farmer, near a village in western New York. He was in independent circumstances; had a good farm, well improved and stocked,—was out of debt. My mother was indeed a helpmate to him, and I, his only living child, tried to be all that a dutiful son could be. My father was as favorably situated to enjoy life, as a man could be. He had acquired his property by industry and economy, having left his father's door in Vermont a month after his majority, with two plain suits of clothes, and two dollars in his pocket. He should have been contented and happy. He was contented and happy while he was struggling to get a competency. But when he had 'every thing fixed to his notion,' and had but to spend the evening of his life in ease and independence, he began to hanker after a more lucrative business than farming. There are always enough hard pressed merchants in every country village, to jump at the chance of drawing a substantial farmer into their ruinous business, by means of which they may put off, for a season, the evil day of their failure. My father went into partnership with one of these merchants. In less than two years, he was a miserable bankrupt. The blow was too much for his proud spirit. The day after his paper was protested, he shot himself. Need I tell you of my poor mother's

grief! All my father's property was sold, to satisfy the demands against him. It did satisfy them, but there was nothing left for my mother's support. A part of the landed property was my mother's, bequeathed to her by her father. Contrary to the earnest wishes of her friends, she let this go also into the devouring jaws of bankruptcy. I was sixteen years old, and had a good education. I was in the senior class at college, when I heard of my father's death. I felt that my first duty, now, was to support my mother. I was inexperienced in struggling for a livelihood, and felt a diffidence and mortification in attempting it where I had been brought up in independence. I told my mother I was going West; that I must work for our support, and that I could not work there. She tried to dissuade me, but my resolution was taken. She then insisted on accompanying me: this I objected to. I could not bear the thought of dragging my mother from all the pleasant associations of her life. My associations were immature. I could form new ones. I could transplant myself into new society; but to move her, would be like uprooting the full-grown tree from its thousand permanent attachments. During the last four years, I have supported my mother, by teaching; and have saved enough to buy me a nice little farm of eighty acres near Sandusky. This, sir, is my brief history; and you can well imagine that my experience in the difficulties of life has taught me to sympathize with those who are in trouble."

CHAPTER XV.

A meeting with familiar Characters on the Cars. An important Conversation overheard, and a dark Conspiracy revealed. The Narrator's return to Cincinnati. Sister Moredock, the charming Medium. A Trump. A Philosophical Libertine. Marrying for Money. A spendthrift getting economical. An unexpected meeting before Sister Moredock's. The Police attend a "Spiritual Circle." Interesting Developments. A description of the twenty members of a "Circle." The antics of Mediums, such as Singing, Shouting, Jerking, etc. A deluded Old Lady. Philosophy of the Human Battery. A Button-rose of a Woman. Spiritual Singing. Spiritual Usher or "Ring-Master."

I WAS soon flying homeward again behind the iron-lunged horse. The only passenger that got in the cars at —— beside myself, was a man muffled up so that nothing could be seen of him but his two eyes and the point of his nose. It appeared to me that a similarly dressed man got off from the cars at the same time we did. I thought nothing further of the matter however.

After leaving Toledo I wrapped myself up in my cloak preparatory to taking a railroad nap,—which is not a very sound one, as everybody knows. After having changed cars at Dayton, it being two or three o'clock in the morning, I was lying half awake in a sort of semi-unconscious state. The muffled gentleman and another man sat behind me. This man happening on every train that I did, began to awaken a curiosity in my mind, to know his business and destination.

The two commenced talking together in an undertone. "I followed them up," the muffled man said:

"Talk lower," his companion whispered, "he will hear you."

My ears catching this, fully awakened me; but I did not stir.

"Oh! he is sound asleep; he can't hear any thing we say. He has no suspicions that I have been following him."

"Did Henriette go through with them?"

"Yes; I saw them all safe at ——. You can bet on Jack seeing a thing through, when he undertakes it."

"This taking the girl along liked to have knocked all our calculations into a cocked-hat; but we will bring it all round right yet."

"I say, Landor—." At this I started involuntarily, and came near betraying myself; but they took it for an ordinary start in the sleep, which one is apt to experience in trying to sleep in the cars.

"I say, Landor," continued the muffled man, after a short pause,—to be certain that I was asleep, "the sooner you go up there the better, for this fellow has got a handsome young school-teacher to take charge of the pretty bird; and it wouldn't be any thing more than natural if he should be throwing his salt around and catch your pretty paradise bird."

This schoolmaster is about as good looking as you are, and a heap more hon——; excuse me, I mean he has such an innocent way with him, that will be sure to make her surrender, back there in the woods, where she is entirely without fortifications. By-the-way, Landor, that is a glorious place up there in the woods;—a very aboriginal country;—pardon me for using this high-fa-lu-tin word; you mustn't be surprised if I rip one out, once in a while, for I have salted down several of them since I've been with you. There was a time when I could use high-fa-lu-tin words with the smartest of you; but when I took to whisky, I took whisky's words.

I had a regular sheep-skin once, from a New York college; I sold it for a drink of bad brandy at a Water-street doggery. But I was talking about the country up there, which is rather more interesting to you just now, than "Or'nary Jack."

The land, up there, is as flat and unvaried as brother Cockmadoodle's face; nothing but tall trees, with here and there a few logs thrown together, which they call a house. I envy you your pleasant thoughts while rusticating in this interesting country; it is a pity that it is not summer time, for I know you would enjoy some delightful music from the native songsters of the bush; I mean those little songsters with such penetrating melody, and bills, insisting on cousin-in-n-n-ing—everybody they come across. They are great at serenading, and never complain of a bad cold, nor break down from excess of modesty. And then there is a peculiarity in the atmosphere up there, that makes a fellow feel remarkably cool of a hot day. You don't need any refrigerators now though, I imagine.

Do stop your eternal joking, Jack, and tell me if any thing new has turned up, to require a change in our tactics; for, I tell you, Jack, I am bound to enjoy that lovely Henriette. Curse the luck that snatched her from me, when the cup was at my lips. If I had my choice, to lose my whole fortune or the hope of enjoying that charming little minx, I would lose the fortune, every cent of it.

"Say, Landor, about how many hundred thousand dollars have you got of *your own?*"

"None of your d—d business. You must take great delight in throwing up such disagreeable things to me."

"Oh, no! not at all. I only asked to get a statistical fact (as I believe the newspapers call it). You know,

I'm a great fellow for statistics. But, I say, Landor, again, if you don't want to lose your bird, you had better be moving round, salt in hand. This is a pretty strong game you're playing, and it must be played with a nimble hand and eyes open, or you lose it; and what is more, your reputation,—I say, Landor, aint that rich,—your reputation. Ha! ha! ha!"

"I'll start day after to-morrow. We have a Circle to-morrow night,—the first we have had since Guysot was silly enough to get sorry for his deeds,—and die about it; I don't know as I have any reason to mourn very hard,—for, if I work my cards right, I will fill his place as the moving spirit of our Circle. It is absolutely necessary that I should be there to-morrow night, in order to make things as lively as possible,—to keep things moving, so that no unpleasant thoughts of our previous meeting intrude themselves. It is to come off at Sister Moredock's, our charming medium who gives us such agreeable communications."

"Yes," said Jack, in whose partially uncovered face I recognized the countenance of one of the company of the fatal evening. I had turned myself, as if in my sleep, so that I could see both of their faces distinctly. "Yes; the widow Moredock is a charming medium; she does bring up such delightful spirits. None but the happy, rollicksome kind have any thing to do with her;" and he nudged Landor familiarly in the side,—as much as to say, "aint we old birds?" Don't we know what we're about? *Her* electricity repels (as you science folks calls it), all gloomy, old maidish spirits. Sister Moredock is a trump, and nothing else. I say, Landor, by-the-way, wouldn't she be a good card for you to take along up there? You could lead off with her, or keep her under your sleeve, or shoot her out of

a pistol,—as the sleight-at-hand humbugs do. You could use her in any way, and she would come up Mrs. "High-low-Jack-and-the-game every time. When I say Mrs. Jack, don't understand that she ever would turn up Mrs. Jack Betson,—for I would as lief marry Barnum's codfish mermaid, as one of these foaming, wilted widows;—I don't see how you can get along without her."

"I hardly know what course it is best to take, Jack. That long-headed Matilda, taking Henriette with her, has almost, if not quite, frustrated my plans. If she had only left her in Cincinnati, or had left her on the way, as I supposed she would, there would be less difficulty; but as long as Matilda is with her, you might as well try to steal a cub from a she bear. But then the greater the difficulties to be overcome, the greater the victory and the greater the enjoyment. These difficulties will give me excitement; and I like excitement,—I must have it,—I would die without it.

"Don't you know, Jack, that the greatest pleasure is in the pursuit of an object,—the labor of attaining it? When the hilltop of our aspirations is attained,—when we have accomplished our object and got every thing fixed to our notion,—we are no longer stimulated by that which was so lately our most potent stimulus to action. I think, however, that I never will lose interest in this fair object, even after she has become wholly mine; for I love her. You may smile and make grimaces as much as you please, but I believe that I really and truly love Henriette Brandon. I believe I could live with her my whole life, without becoming satiated with her charms. I don't, nor never did, love my wife. I married her for her money. I have it, and there is an unsatisfied void,—a gnawing in my heart,—

that she can never satisfy. I consider our connection nothing less than legalized adultery,—on my part, at least. She has become repulsive to me; her embraces are loathsome. The riches that I have obtained with her hardly compensate for the loathing that I endure. It is as if I were shut up in a tomb, with a corpse for my companion, and with no hopes of liberation till death bursts the door. It grows worse with me continually."

"And especially since you came across this Hettie," chimed in Jack.

"Yes, you know very well that I have been perfectly carried away with her;—I worship her. She is my idol. If I were free, she should be mine without taint. But I am not free, and she must be mine in the only other way. This operation is a-going to be very expensive too,—paying you and De Long."

"De Long in a horn," said Jack, sticking his tongue out at the corner of his mouth and pointing over his left shoulder.

"And then," continued Landor, "I shall have to shell out to the spiritual ring-leaders, up there, in order to enlist them in my cause; or more properly speaking, I must hire the spirits, for they seem to be as much given to the main chance, as before leaving the corporeal form. You must be as reasonable in your charge as you can, Jack, for there is no telling how much all this will foot up."

"Well now, if that don't take me; getting economical, I declare. Why, you talk as if you had earned all this money by hard knocks,—cent by cent. When a man earns money as easy as you do, by boarding with a good-looking woman, I think it is rather small business for him to be jewing his hard-working servants. Why, if I was in your place, and could gain the prize you are after, I would spend every cent, if necessary, even if I

should lose the prize next morning." The long whistle of the locomotive announced our approach to the Queen city.

"Come over to Sister Moredocks, to-night, Jack," said Landor in a dull voice, having enveloped his face in a large shawl.

"Let's see,—what's her address?"

"No —— —— st."

And that was the last I heard of the two worthies who had so interested me for the last hour. I hastened to my room, and wrote to Matilda, telling her what I had heard and warning her to be on her guard. I asked, if she were sure that she was with her parents?

The evening of the next day, at nine o'clock, found me before the house designated by Landor: it was a plain three-story brick; the window-curtains were close drawn; there did not seem to be any one in the front part of the house. I concluded that there could be nothing learned here, and was about turning to go home, when a female figure, completely enveloped in a huge cloak and hood, approached, timidly, the steps of the house, and stopped. She appeared embarrassed at meeting a person here.

After viewing me a moment by the faint light of a distant street lamp, as I was walking away, she spoke to me in a low voice,—a half whisper:

"Will you excuse me in addressing you, sir, for I seem forced to do it? Are you acquainted in this house?"

"No, madam, I am not."

"Will you accompany me in it, for I am afraid to go alone? This request seems strange,—perhaps immodest, to you. Judge me not to be a character that takes this time and bold manner to seduce you to some den of infamy. I am a wife,—a virtuous wife,—and a mother; I have been forced here this night to satisfy my

wretched mind, as to the fidelity of a beloved husband. A villain has whispered in my ear, that my husband is false: it is a lie! I will not believe it," she said, with a feeling that showed how deeply she suffered. "This villain, who wished to make me jealous of my husband, for his own base gratification, told me to come to this house to-night, and I would be convinced of my husband's infidelity. A society of spiritual Free-Lovers meet here to-night, he said, and that my husband was one of them. I can not believe it, and have come here to satisfy myself; but my heart fails me; I feel my weakness. Will it be too much, sir, to ask you to go with me into this house?"

I told her I did not think it would be safe for me to intrude myself into their company alone, for I was already obnoxious to them. I proposed accompanying her to a police station, where we could get a sufficient force to go with us. She consented. On our way, I asked her name.

"I will tell you," she replied, "but you must give me your word that it shall go no further. I am the wife of the Rev. Mr. Falleau."

I started at this announcement, and she noticed it. "What! do you know any thing of him?" she asked, anxiously.

"Oh, I have heard of his name." Misery comes soon enough, without our lending it a helping hand. Some chance might yet avert the dreadful revelation from her.

We were soon back, with an efficient posse. The lieutenant stationed two men at each door, to prevent any one escaping: then, with three staunch fellows and the lady and myself, he approached the front door. He rang the bell. A footstep was heard, and then an

unintelligible word was asked by a female voice. Having learned the "passwords" of Matilda, I immediately answered. The door was opened. The girl was about to shriek, on seeing the watchmen's stars on their breast; but the lieutenant stopped her by whispering, "Hush! say not a word, or you will go to the watch-house. But if you will tell me all about the doings in this house, and show me all through it, I will let you off."

"Oh yis, I'll do it, indade I will, intirely, if ye'll let me go fray."

"Can't you take me into a side room, where I can see the whole performance?"

"Yis, come this way, walk softly." And she led us into the front parlor,—separated from a large room, back of it, by several folding-doors, which had much shrunken, so as to leave a large crevice between each, through which the light gleamed from the back room. Mrs. Falleau sank, overcome, on a sofa. The back room presented a varied, not to say picturesque appearance. A greater variety of marked physiognomies is seldom seen grouped together. A Circle, numbering nearly a score, sat around a circular table, a lady and gentleman alternately, having their hands in contact on the top of the table. The person nearest appeared to be a jaundiced mulatto, with black hair, which persisted in curling, in spite of certain oily and glutinous applications; anomalous gray eyes, illy corresponding with the dark complexion and hair; lips whose natural thickness was unmistakable; and a nose whose wide alæ continually expanded and collapsed like the gills of a fish. His dark hand, which looked as though it might have held a plow-handle at no very distant day, rested on the hand of a tall, spare-featured, hawk-nosed

woman, who was continually twitching and jerking, making the most serio-ludicrous and ghastly grimaces, very much like the galvanized motions of a corpse; her right hand was in connection with the elegant Landor's left, who did not suffer much spasmodically; there was too much animal substance about him, to be jerking round like one with the St. Vitus' dance; he was willing that the others should do all the ridiculous jerking, while he looked after the unjerking realities. A man of as strong mind as his, must have a good deal of self-control over the risibilities of his nature, to sit in that ridiculous group with an unmoved countenance. The nerves of expression must be under the best control; they must be abject slaves to the will, to thus permit the face to remain in a calm, unruffled and serious quiescence. A much stronger affinity seemed to exist between his right hand and its connection, than between his left and its spasmodic connection. Whether there was a throwing off of the galvanic fluids by the St. Vitics of the hawk-nosed lady, thus diverting the magnetism that should have attracted her hand to Landor's, or whether the soft extremity which his right hand pressed belonged to a body more attractive (using the common-sense definition of the word attraction), I do not undertake to decide.

The hawk-nosed lady was a more powerful battery, no doubt; but her *gal*-vanism was of the explosive, *shock*-ing kind, not of that still, melting kind, which undoubtedly distinguished that of the mechanism on Landor's right. Judging, unilluminated by the lights of galvano-passional philosophy, the observer would not have wondered why his dextral hand was the more attracted. She on his right was the light-haired crystalline-complexioned and cerulean-eyed being, who

enchanted the company with her angelic melody on the night of Guysot's death; she was a virtuous, sincere but deluded devotee of Spiritualism. She believed implicity in spiritual manifestations; her open, guileless countenance was proof sufficient of this.

Matilda had given me an account of this young lady; she was, before she became deluded with Spiritualism, one of the most pious members of the —— church. Many a young lady of that church owes her change of heart and conversion to Laura ——'s tender conversation and prayers. She then sang in the church choir. Her clear, melodious voice was heard with delight by the enraptured congregation. She was, indeed, the pride of her parents, of the choir, of the congregation, of all circles in which she moved. But the tempter came likewise to her. She listened to his mysterious fascinations, and now she has abjured her religion; she shuns the church, the benevolent society, the prayer-meeting; she has caused unutterable grief to her parents; and she follows this phantom, that will lead her through suffering and anguish, to certain destruction.

Several very common-looking links occurred here, not worthy of any special notice.

A red-wiskered, red-moustached, red-headed, red-nosed, red-handed and red-eyed, or rather yellow-eyed man, of about thirty, was the next fiery link in this living chain. It would seem as though the poles of the Circle should have met in this individual; for it would have required but a faint stretch of the imagination to have seen sparks snapping from his nose to his hair or *vice versa;* although the common safety of the Circle, and of combustible things in the vicinity, might, perhaps, have pointed out dangers attending such an arrangement. As if to quench any spontaneous igni-

tion that might take place in this glowing link, it was connected on the right with a decidedly aqueous element,—a perfect annihilator of any passional combustion,—an old lady, wrinkled as a root of dried ginseng. A single elongated eye-tooth hung down "solitary and alone" from her right upper jaw, like the surviving tusk of a venerable walrus. She looked through a pair of large, round glasses, set in that strongest of metals. The iron shafts in which her head worked, were fastened behind with a shiny piece of tape that had held said shafts together from time immemorial. What flesh she was the owner of was of that puffy, œdematous, tawny, death-colored kind which distinguishes miasm-fed humans. The Circle being considered a battery, however, it may work better by having this great diversity in the passional corrosibility of its plates.

It would seem that undesirable links sometimes intrude themselves into the spiritual Circles, honestly believing, as this old lady did, every thing that is publicly said by spiritual lecturers; they think that these private Circles are but for *bona fide* communications with the spirits. These old walrus-toothed ladies, contrary to the wishes of the younger and more passional members, insist on attending these Circles, and dampening the electrical fires by their watery presence.

This deluded old lady, with the big specks and gaping mouth, was connected with an anomalous link on the right. The predominant features of this link were a groundwork of alpaca, a head covered with harsh, grizzly hair, standing erect,—porcupine like,—a mass of reddish-brown hair hanging over his eyes, mouth and chin, like hay hanging out at the doors of a well-filled barn. Two deep-seated, revolving balls of blue, black and white gleamed in their deep recesses, almost hid-

den from view by the overhanging eyebrows. There was no expression to the face, for what expression is a face covered with hair susceptible of? It can not laugh, it can not blush, no more than a cast iron face; it has but one appearance, that of "I will devour you." By occasional unintelligible chatterings, this link indicated that it was not made of American iron, but that it was of foreign ore, forged in the furnaces of Lyons or Andalusia. His long bony fingers, not only pressed but spasmodically grasped the manual extremities of the next link,—a lady on whose forehead we imagined we saw the Roman characters XLIV done in wrinkles; she had large blue eyes, and one of the awfulest mouths and pairs of lips that ever ornamented the face divine. We dreaded to see them open, for fear of becoming dizzy and falling headlong into some yawning chasm. But she was an old bird, perfectly aware of the superfluous width of her *labia oris*, and when she spoke, kept the corners of her mouth shut, opening the central part only. I have seen ladies with wide mouths do this thing before, and have often been on the point of suggesting that a stitch taken in each corner would save a great deal of surveillance over this naturally expansive organ. This lady had dark hair; it had an unnatural darkness, much like the color of certain French casimeres; a little curl pouted out from the fastenings of her hair, like a scrubby cedar over a rocky precipice. She persisted in keeping her bonnet on. By accident a fold of hair had caught in the wire of the bonnet, raising the hair, and displaying, underneath, hair of quite a different color,—the reverse of black. This, however, might have been an optical illusion. This lady was a spiritual lecturer; something of this kind would have suggested itself if I never had heard her in this capacity. There

was a staid staring on objects about her, with a half contemptuous expression, as much as to say, "This is not half so good a performance as I can get up at a 'dime' to pay expenses." She could not subside into a smile by any means; her mouth was kept drawn up as though she had been eating green plums.

The next link was one that promised to be of peculiar interest at the present sitting; it was no more nor less than a golden clerical link, the Rev. Mr. Falleau, the magnet that had attracted our interesting little company here. He was a man of about forty, appeared to be a lively common-sense fellow, taking the good things of the world as they came and letting the bad ones alone. This is the opinion one would form of him at the first glance,—and first glances are generally confirmed by subsequent glances.

The next link brought us round to where we commenced. This last link was decidedly the brightest one in the chain; it was of burnished gold, sparkling with brilliants. She was a magnificent woman in miniature; like an object lessened by distance, displaying all its beauties, but concealing its imperfections. She was beauty concentrated. These little models of female perfection,—these canary ladies,—contain more woman in them than can be found in half a dozen of the shanghai species. She was small but perfect; a real button rose of a woman; luxuriant black hair; long, black eyelashes; eyes that verily shot forth blackness; clear complexion; plump cheeks, tinged with natural vermilion; a set of symmetrical, dazzling teeth; a pair of rose-tinted lips, that had no similitude in nature, a very fountain of hymeneal nectar; a neck which gradually expanded into shoulders and chest of ravishing voluptuousness; little round plump hands, with tapering, dim-

pled fingers, whose ends looked like rose leaves, covered with crystals; one of which hands rested complacently in the hand of the preacher, and the other in the hand of the tawny link. The St. Vitics' and chicken-gapings of the hawk-nosed lady gradually merged into a vocal manifestation in the shape of a hymn, which, if it were sung as an ultra-mundane production, we should feel very much like setting it down as a palpable plagiarism, or an infringement of the inter-spherical copyright law; for we were confident that our physical ear-drums had vibrated to that tune before.

If the medium's monkey-shines were laughable before, they were now, when mingled with her cracked, sepulchral voice, ludicro-ghastly; her grimaces and efforts at singing, resembled a hen's efforts at crowing. In fact, I don't know of any better comparison of the lady's appearance, than to that of a strong-minded hen with spurs, mounted on the barnyard gate, and there crooking her neck and opening her bill in imitation of her crowing companion. A very good-looking man, with well trimmed beard, and moustaches which were very black (whether colored or not, I am not able to say), operated outside the Circle as a sort of stage-manager, or more properly a "ring-master," suggesting what might possibly take place in the Circle, as though the spirits on their road to their media, gave him a call as at a half-way house; by which means he was enabled to give an inkling, or prophetic indication of the manifestations about to take place.

He held an enviable position, having the privilege of hearing the rehearsals of the spirits,—of reading their proof sheets.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Outsiders of the Circle. A Young Widow. A well-matched Couple. A withered lady puffed out and patched up. A "Poll-evil Man." Last Chance for Matrimony. An old Spiritual Stage-horse not fond of dry Provender. A Latin Communication. A Smoky Medium. An Indian Communication. Tecumseh on the Stand; Tells who killed him; Down on Dick Johnson. Spiritual force "*versus*" Gravitation. How the "Tapping" and "Knocking" are done. A very Interesting Room up-stairs. Admitted behind the Scenes of a Spiritual Stage. How the Tables are moved.

THE company, out of the "Circle," was composed of some fifteen persons or more, as a general thing rather better looking than those in the Circle. They did not seem to manifest much anxiety as to what the communications might be, for they all appeared to be enjoying themselves socially, and even affectionately, in pairs, disposed in different parts of the room. There was a red-headed little fellow billing it very cosily with a young widow;—that she was a young widow was evident,—no mistake about that. Young widows have that sly way of being modest, *excessively modest*,—at the same time saying "you can come in if you want to,"—that perfectly overcomes and carries away all young fellows not accustomed to "widow hunting in South Africa." They are like old mother Grimes' rangum-root-plaster,—bland and mild, and yet "drawing."

The widow, for thus we shall persist in calling her, was longer than the brick colored barge that she had in tow; but she had a skillful way of keeping her bow a little below the barge, which inspired him with confidence above his inches. The observer could not help

thinking that here was a wrong arrangement. The pair should have changed faces and clothes, and then things would have gone on more naturally. In one corner of the room, however, there was a couple well matched,—so far as external physical appearance was concerned. The feminine half of the couple, was the sharp-featured lady with the ringlets, and "remarkably red cheeks for her age,"—spoken of before. She was doing her best to show her artificial teeth,—a full set,—and undoubtedly kept in their places by atmospheric pressure, for there certainly could not have been a snag to fasten them to. Her lips had not become perfectly adapted to the teeth as yet, indicating that she had gone a long time without teeth of any kind, and acquired a peculiar motion of the lower jaw, called "gumming it," a vestige of which motion was still to be noticed in the lady's (to speak mildly) depressed cheeks. The male part of this pair looked like an old stage-horse that had been completely stove-up. He had been a middle-sized man, but he was so stiffened and bent, that it was hard to tell his real stature. His neck was stiff, which, as a matter of course, interfered with the rotary motion of his head materially; he carried his head precisely as a horse does, that has had the "poll-evil." His hair was permitted to grow to its fullest extent. It hung down in thin, long tags from his head, chin and lower jaw,—like Spanish moss from a cottonwood tree. This Free-Loveism is a glorious thing for him. This was his last chance for getting reciprocally affectionated. His only hope was to get some deluded fair one deranged with this spiritual madness sufficiently (and it would require a decided lunacy) to imagine him to be her electrical partner! the one created from the beginning for her,—a slice of spirit chipped off from the great original

spirit-ball, about the same time her spirit was chipped off, originated expressly to be united with hers and no other. One would judge, however, from that wry sort of a face of his (as though he had been eating sour apples), that she by his side was not the *bona fide* chip that was chipped for his chip; that he did not recognize her as the duplicate of his check, although she appeared to have originated at about the same time as himself, to wit, about the time of the last war with Great Britain;—this stove-up stage-horse with the stiff neck, was most unquestionably roving round the verdant fields of Spiritualism for a fresher, greener bite. He was old enough to distinguish between the tasteless, dried up prairie-grass hay and the tender June grass of the new meadow. This old horse was not to be caught with a sheaf of straw. His nose, though brought to bear on an object with difficulty, on account of rigidity of the cervical muscles, could distinguish "what was what," at an inspiration.

Just as we were passing on to an analysis of the next galvanic pile, the copper plate of which was the lady that I had seen with Guysot at the theater, the ring-master arose, and very modestly, almost painfully so, announced that there was a Latin spirit and an Indian spirit in the vicinity;—Mr. Latin spirit having the precedence, both as to priority and superior prowess, would occupy the smoky medium first. That the ring-master's foreshadowings were legitimate prophecies, was proved by the smoky subject aforesaid slowly rising to his feet, with a twitching of the eyelids, like a toad in a hail-storm. This twitching extended to the muscles of the face and back, until the subject was "brought up standing" with what a physician would have diagnosed *tetanus*, and not only *tetanus* but *Opisthotonos*.

This battery, after great and painful efforts, every one of which was keenly felt by the aqueous old lady with the big specks, finally began to work,—in other words, the Latin began to issue in short, sudden jets, for all the world like the steam issuing from the scape-pipe of a one-horse engine! just as the ring-master had predicted. Who could doubt spiritual manifestations after this!

The old lady could not, nor none like her; she sat with open mouth and staring eyes, perfectly entranced. This was a wonderful thing to her,—a man with no "book larnin, talkin' Latin." That it was "Latin," no one questioned, of course. But if it were Latin it belonged to an idiom that we never had read; in fact we set it down as being much more Congo than Latin. The medium had the extreme kindness to translate his Latin into English, so that those less learned mortals not having communications with deceased Cæsars and Antonies might understand. The gist of the communication was, as interpreted (and we don't see how this could have been, for the ancient Latins are not supposed to have known any thing of American Indians), that the said smoky medium was of copper-headed or rather copper-colored descent; that the dark tinge which characterized his complexion was from an admixture of copper and not of soot, as one would have inferred; that this smoky appearance was an optical illusion, as also the curling of the hair, and the depression of the bridge of the nose, and the expansion of the nostrils. All this was not so, as it looked to be. After the Latin spirit had left the medium, the spirit of a deceased Indian chief, which had been very impatiently waiting its turn, "pitched into" the medium with a whoop! The *opisthotonotic* spasms were now increased, and the

grimaces were truly horrible. An old negro woman, who talked more like a parrot than a human, was called on to interpret the "Injun" communication, for the medium could not understand what he had just said (which, indeed, was not to be wondered at).

The spirit turned out to be Tecumseh's. It seems that it came on purpose to put an end to that long dispute as to "who killed Tecumseh!" This vexatious question may now be considered settled, for here we have Tecumseh's own account of it. Tecumseh said that if ever he came across Dick Johnson, in the spirit-land, he was going to give him "particular thunder," for arrogating to himself the honor of killing Tecumseh." The spirit, *per* smoky medium *et per* old granny Parrot, was about to tell who did kill Tecumseh, when he was pitched into by the foreign link with the hairy face and blue eyes. He also spoke in an unknown tongue, and appeared to be in great distress for the want of an interpreter. He finally got so fully charged with electricity that it carried him bodily to the top of the table; he used his legs in getting up, to be sure, but that was merely for form's sake,—the moving power was the spiritual influence; and wonderful to relate, the medium, though wholly in the power of the spirit, seeming to have no thought of his physical identity, was careful never to step over the frame of the table on to the lids, in which case there would have been a test between the suspensory power of Spiritualism and the physical power of gravitation. This Leyden jar having been discharged of its superabundance of electricity, it succeeded in getting off from the table without accident. I heard now a feeble, rattling noise in the parlor, scarcely loud enough to be distinguished. The young woman,

who ushered us in, still standing near the lieutenant, seemed agitated,—the rattle was heard again; she whispered in the lieutenant's ear:

"This is a sign for me to pull some strings."

"Pull away," he replied. She went a few steps from him, and immediately distinct raps were heard on the table; several communications, and answers, were "rapped" out, to the perfect satisfaction of the company. The rattle was again heard, but it went much faster; our guide came to the lieutenant and said she must go up stairs; he told me to go with her. In the room immediately above where the Circle was sitting, was an immense bar of iron, weighing, I should think, two hundred pounds, bent in the shape of a horse-shoe; it hung from the ceiling by a cord; this cord was attached to a pulley that ran around the ceiling in an iron groove, so that the bar of iron could be easily swung to any part of the room. In the center of the room was a large square opening in the floor, directly over the Circle-table, below. In the ceiling of the room, over the table, and covering the square opening, was a beautifully wrought open-work, which permitted one from above to look down and see all that was going on in the room below, but which obstructed the view from below upward. The objects in the room could just be distinguished by the light which penetrated through the open-work in the ceiling. The legs of the huge iron bar were hoisted upward toward the ceiling of the chamber, being held in that position by a suspensory cord; at the sign of a rattle in the chamber, my guide let the legs of the iron bar down. I immediately heard a commotion of voices beneath, among which could be distinguished, "Hold it down." "Put your hands on it." "Keep it down." My guide commenced moving the iron bar around the

room; looking down through the open-work, I could see the table moving, and following the same course as the iron; it seemed to be lifted up, as by some mysterious force from above, and was kept from raising to the ceiling, by the hands of the Circle: the manager gave the word, "let go;" immediately the table came up to the ceiling and remained stationary while the iron bar was still. I could see in the countenances of some of the persons below, expressions of wonder and amazement. The old lady with the big specks, particularly, was staring, wonder—personified; while others appeared wonder-struck, with an effort, as though they felt confident that they understood the whole operation, but did not wish to disabuse their less initiated neighbors of their wonderment, and thus deprive them of a rich feast of delusion. None tried to appear more astonished than the ring-master himself. But he opened his mouth and eyes altogether too wide to be natural. Another rattle, and the iron came back to the center of the room, its legs were drawn up with the pulley, and down went the table from the ceiling.

"I suppose you understand all this," my guide whispered.

"There is a strong magnet concealed in the woodwork of the table, is there not?"

"Yes," she replied, "but don't never tell any one, for I should be afraid of my life, if they find out what I have done." We returned to the parlor.

CHAPTER XVII.

Mrs. Falleau (the Preacher's wife) meets her Husband in Sister Moredock's Parlor. A Fashionable Minister. Grand stampede among the Spiritualists. Mr. Falleau's Residence. Landor persuades the Preacher to elope with Miss Callan. Struggle between Sin and Conscience. Sin triumphs by the aid of Brandy. Landor has an interview with Miss Callan; His appeal to her. Wavering between Virtue and fear of Disgrace. A Convincing Argument. They all leave in the Cars for the North.

THE lieutenant was at a loss what to do. He had not seen any thing that would justify him in interfering in the case; although, that it was a skillfully-woven and dangerous net of prostitution, did not admit of a doubt. He was about retiring with his men, when Mrs. Falleau, who had brought us to the house, having taken courage to approach one of the crevices of the doors, fell back with a scream. Her head struck the floor with a crash like the breaking of an earthen vessel. The folding-doors burst open, and such a scene of affrighted looks and hysterical screams, is not often witnessed.

As soon as they recovered themselves, they attempted to leave the room; but the watchmen outside held the doors. Some of the ladies hid their blushing faces; one man stood with his head down, crest-fallen in the extreme,—prostrated with shame. Oh! how he wished for some trap-door to let him sink from sight!

Need I state who this gentleman was? He saw his devoted wife, whom he had sworn to honor, not only as a man but as a minister of God. There he stood,—he whose business it was to preach fidelity and purity; to set an example before the world, of conjugal chastity,—

from home, in a strange house,—at a late hour of the night, rioting in fond dalliance with a female not his wife. And yet this is the learned, the pleasant, the talented, the eloquent, the pious, the dearly-beloved Rev. Edmund Falleau; the champion of orthodox religion, and the model man of the dear "Sisters."

"Oh! what a lovely minister we have got," I heard a Mrs. retired Pigs Feet and Tripe, say to one of the Sisters, on their return home from church, but a few days before; "what nice sermons he does preach! and then he has such a pleasant way with him; his company is so agreeable; and, by-the-way, he has called on us every evening, of late, in his walks that he takes for exercise. He has taken a great interest in my youngest sister, who is spending a few weeks with us on a visit."

This conversation was called to mind on seeing a young lady in the company, who fain would have hid herself; whose features bore a strong resemblance to the sister who was so highly-favored, of late, with the Rev. Mr. Falleau's calls.

Our attention was now called to Mrs. Falleau, whose head had struck a spittoon, producing a frightful gash,—separating the scalp from the skull for two or three inches,—the spittoon itself was broken. Having washed the blood from her face with some cold water, she revived, exclaiming: "Oh! Edmund, you have broken my heart; you have broken my heart! I could not have believed it."

"Here is your wife, Mr. Falleau," said the lieutenant, who appeared to be acquainted with him. "You had better take care of her."

The young lady whom I had just noticed, dropped her hands from her face, and with frighted visage fell back into the arms of one of the more courageous women.

"Mr. Falleau, hadn't you better go and get a carriage for your wife," the lieutenant coolly continued. This was a relief to the truant preacher, and he gladly sneaked out. A carriage was soon heard at the door. The driver said, "He was sent there for a lady; that the gentleman who sent him had been taken suddenly ill, and had gone on home, where he wished the lady to be brought."

The lieutenant wished me to accompany him with Mrs. F. to her home. He told the spiritual Circleists, that he should watch their proceedings, and if he saw any thing he could take hold of, he should "put them through."

Having sent off his men, we entered the carriage. Mrs. F. had recovered, although she was very weak from loss of blood. By the help of a pair of scissors and a strip of muslin, I had bound the wound up as best I could. We found the Rev. gentleman awaiting our arrival.

Having assisted her into the house, Mr. F took us aside and begged of us, that we would not "let this thing out;" he proffered each of us a twenty dollar gold piece. He said he would do better in future; that he had been drawn into this by the urgent solicitation of friends; but, that he was heartily sorry for it.

As we were entering the carriage, I noticed a man, very much resembling Landor, going round the corner of the door-yard fence. After we had gone a square or two, I asked to be let out, and retracing my steps cautiously, got near enough to hear the conversation between a man on the outside of the fence, and one on the inside, who, I discovered to be Landor and the preacher. Landor was advising Mr. Falleau to take Miss Callan and accompany him, that very night, to the North. "You will be found out," he said, "and dis-

graced before your church, if you remain here; and is it not better to leave before you are subjected to this humiliation! And until you are found out, your life will be a perfect hell to you, dreading in every human countenance an accuser,—expecting every word that is addressed to you to be an exposure. And beside, if you remain, you will lose the bird that you can now reach forth and take."

"But my two children! I can not leave them!"

"Oh! fudge on the children. You can pick up as many children as you want, gratis, without the trouble of raising them. Oh! never mind about the children; your wife will go to her father's, and they will be taken care of better than if you had them yourself. You are in the same connubial fix that I am. You have a wife that you can not love. If there be any truth in the doctrine of 'freedom of the affections,' which we both believe in, we are justifiable in placing our affections on whomsoever we choose; and it is not only right, but your duty, to leave the woman who causes you to commit adultery continually, and enjoy the one for whom you have an affection."

"Oh! I feel that I did wrong, Landor,—very wrong,—in listening to your tempting invitations, in the first place, to investigate this subject. My heart told me, it was wickedness; but I was tempted to tamper and dally with it, until I became enamored of its seductive philosophy; and now, see where it has brought me. Landor, I am heartily sorry that I ever suffered myself to be thus led astray; and if I thought I could abandon this wicked course, and return to the path of rectitude, and feel safely restored to the bosom of my family and church, I would prostrate myself at the feet of my God, and strive to live a pure life in future."

"Well, you are a brave-hearted fellow, I declare. You believe in the glorious principles of Free-Love with a vengeance! The affection that you have avowed for the fair lady who is willing to give up every thing for you, must be sincere indeed! As soon as you see the least inconvenience or obstacle in the way, you give up;—and beside, the die is cast, you can not retrace your steps. That this thing will be made public; that you will be held up as an object of scorn, for every contemptible finger of your church; that your wife and her friends will disgrace and repudiate you, is a matter not to be doubted. You must make up your mind to leave this place at any-rate; and which will you choose,—to leave without having every feeling of your nature insulted,—leave of your own accord and have a young, beautiful, accomplished and loving being as your companion in exile, with the "wherewith" to make your exile supportable; or will you wait to be kicked out, and have your only solace wrested from your arms by her friends? I advise you to seize the favorable opportunity, for another such may not occur. Get ready, and go with me to-morrow morning, and I will get you out of this scrape;—this is not the only place in the world. Your beloved flock is not the only flock; nor is your wife the only lovely woman. The door is opened now for you to go out agreeably;—wait, and you will most assuredly be put out much less pleasantly. What do you say?—will you go—or not?"

The preacher hung his head. I could even hear him sob. It was a struggle, and a fearful one, between right and wrong. He did not think, when he was first seduced by the "passional philosophy," that it would come to this.

"Come, don't be a baby," continued Landor, fearing

his victim would give way to his better nature; "what do you say—freedom or slavery? will you come with me or not?—there is no time to be lost." After hesitating a moment, the preacher replied:

"I can not do otherwise; my fate is sealed. I took the one wrong step from the path of virtue, and now I must continue in the road of sin;—one step downward leads to another and another, continually. I feel that I am lost forever, and the sooner I reach the bottom of my degradation, the better. I will go with you,—I must go,—there is no other course; but oh! how can I leave my children!"

"I will arrange it for you," said Landor. "Go in and write a note to your wife, telling her that you can not survive the shame and infamy that await you; that when she reads this note, you will be a corpse in the river. Take only the clothes you have on, and meet me at the depot at six in the morning; I will engage to bring your charming Miss Callan and the *accompaniments;* so that we can leave this cursed prudish city by the first train in the morning, and enjoy perfect freedom for a while. I have arranged the property I got from my wife, so that I can hold fifty thousand dollars in any contingency. So that if I can catch my pretty bird in the North, I shall never return to the Queen City. But one thing I shall exact of you, if I help you out of your difficulty,—that you will help me in return, and in a similar business. And then we will both go to some far-off place, where we are unknown, and enjoy, as nature designed we should, the pleasures of our unrestrained passional natures.

"Come, get ready. Play your part well. Be a man. I tell you again, the die is cast,—the step is taken, and you can not go back. No whimpering now. Here, take a

good horn of this;—it will strengthen you," said Landor, pulling a wickered flask from his pocket, and almost forcing his companion to take swallow after swallow, till he thought he had taken as much as he could bear. "Well, we haven't any time to spare; meet me at half past five at the depot." With the parting words, "keep good heart," Landor left the preacher, who still stood with his head resting on the railing of the fence. I could hear him weep.

"Oh! what a wretch I am," he muttered once. "But this won't do; I must go; it must be done. Oh, what horror! Had I not better put an end to this miserable existence! I feel that all hope of peace has passed from me. I feel that if I take this last step in infamy, that I shall have committed that unpardonable sin, for which there is no forgiveness. Oh, my God, why am I thus tortured?" His words became less distinct;—the brandy began to take effect.—"Oh, yes,—I'll go, of course I will; no other way; no other way; I must go, that 's all there is about it. And then, have I not got a most charming consoler in my afflictions, and we shall not be bothered with children. Although they are lovable, innocent little things, they cause more trouble than pleasure; and then the money; nothing to hinder us from enjoying ourselves. That 's a good idea about my getting drowned. Ha, ha, ha! ain't that rich! Oh, yes, I'll go and fix it up, for I feel as though I had taken a little too much brandy; and if I don't start pretty soon, and keep myself moving, I may not get to the depot at half past five." He disappeared, with an unsteady step.

Returning home, my attention was arrested, while passing a splendid mansion with a sandstone front, by a couple of voices engaged in earnest conversation;

one was a female voice, and she was saying, in seeming agony of heart, "oh! Landor, I can not take this fearful step; I shall be lost, ruined forever! I never can see a friend or relative again."

"I thought you loved Edmund Falleau," the male voice replied.

"I do, but I can not do this wicked thing," she said, sobbing as though her heart would break.

"Oh, nonsense; if you love him, it is your duty to accompany him at once. Think of the sacrifices he is willing to make for you; he must break the ties that bind him to a beloved family for you. And here you have only to exchange the society of sunny-day flatterers for that of one who loves you with all the ardor and sincerity that man can have for woman. I shall begin to doubt the reality of your love for him, if you hesitate in this manner."

"Oh, it is an awful step!" she moaned.

"Come, say quickly, whether you think enough of him to go with him or not? He is waiting for you at the depot; he has left all that is dear to him in this world for your sake; will you go with him or not?—I must be off."

"Oh, my God! what shall I do," she uttered in agony of spirit.

"Go and get ready, immediately, and don't act so childish. Come, I can't wait; remember that your exposure is certain if you remain here. And I would not be surprised if you should all be brought up before the Police Court in the morning, and, perhaps, put to jail."

"Impossible!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, I almost know it," said Landor, earnestly; glad that he had struck on this happy cord.

"I will go," she said; alarmed at the thought of

exposure. She entered the house, and after a few moments returned to the door and whispered to Landor.

He drew off his boots and followed her; he soon returned, carrying a trunk. Putting it down at the corner of the next square, he carried another small trunk and a carpet bag, and then she came out with him, enshrouded in a large cloth cloak, her head and face covered. They disappeared around the corner of the street, and in a few minutes after a carriage stopped, took the trunks and drove rapidly to the westward.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Waiting for a Letter. A Father's Gratitude. A visit from Henriette's Father; his disappointment. An important Telegraphic Dispatch. A second Trip to the North. The Father's agony. Arrival at our Destination. A Model Landlord. "Dark as Pitch." The Adventures of a Night. "Spiritual Hall." A description of the Company below, and an Account of their doings. Henriette discovered; her perilous situation. Miss Callan. Landor again.

I WENT home and wrote another letter to Matilda, telling her all that had happened. I also wrote one to Henriette, and one to Davison, so that they should be certain to be put on their guard, for I knew now, well enough, that we all had been the dupes of this villainous Landor. I was perfectly satisfied that the avowed parents of Matilda were no kindred of hers. I wondered to myself how we should have been so deceived. But it was a skillful plot, calculated to deceive wiser heads than ours. I wrote to Matilda my conviction that she was not with her parents, and urged her to come back immediately; not to delay a moment. I

waited very impatiently for an answer. Six days had passed and no word. I should have received a letter by this time; but no letter came. I wrote again, and again; another week passed, and no answer,—what shall I do, I asked myself. I had undertaken to protect these females. I had espoused their cause, and it seemed obligatory on me now to do every thing for them in my power. A person will sometimes get enlisted in a cause, he hardly knows how, without expecting any benefit therefrom; he still pursues it with ardor, merely because he has espoused it: it was thus in this case. I had not the least idea of being benefited in any way, but my feelings had been enlisted in it, and a sense of duty seemed now prompting me onward. I had in the meantime written a letter to Henriette's father, stating the whole circumstances, and received an answer from him, covering me with gratitude. These manifestations of a father's gratitude, more than compensated for all the trouble, and interested me still more in the cause. He was to be here in about two weeks, to accompany his daughter home, and he earnestly entreated me to keep her from harm, till he arrived; promising to recompense me well for my trouble. I kept writing, and waiting for answers, through the next two weeks, but in vain. If my business had admitted of it, I should have gone and learned what was the matter. One morning, a very genteel, good-looking man, of about forty, called on me. The first glance told me who he was. There was such a striking resemblance between him and Henriette. He turned very pale, when I told him the situation of his daughter. He seemed to have a presentiment of something wrong. He manifested a fearful foreboding as to the welfare of his Henriette. "I must go after her immediately," he said; and was

about leaving the room as though there was not a moment to be lost.

"You will have to wait till morning, Mr. Brandon, there is no train going out this evening."

"Oh! how can I wait," he exclaimed. "My dear child, my only joy this side the grave! Oh! it seems as though some evil fate were striving to wrest her from me too. Oh, what trouble! what sorrow have I seen in this world!" The tears coursed silently down his manly face, as these pangs burst from his tortured soul.

"Do not despair. I trust that every thing is right. I left them in the care of one I almost could swear would not be guilty of a dishonorable act, and who would protect the honor of his charge as his own. The irregularity of the mails may account for my not hearing from them. Try and compose yourself, so that you can start in the morning with better spirits."

"I can not be composed till I see my child. If only my own happiness or misery depended on this, I might be composed; but, oh, my daughter! my Henriette! Oh, if she should be dishonored! I can not endure the thought! Oh, that this doubt, this dark cloud, could be removed!"

At about two o'clock, the next morning, I was awakened by a continued thumping at the street door, and ringing of the door bell; the door was finally opened. "Here is a dispatch for ——; see if he wants to answer." I started from bed on hearing my name, and met the porter on the steps. The dispatch read:

——, OHIO.

—— Come here immediately! No delay, or all is lost!

(Signed) A FRIEND.

Answer.

I immediately wrote on the back of the dispatch, "I will come," and sent it to the messenger. I dressed myself,—for I could sleep no more that night. After I had taken a cup of coffee with Mr. Brandon in the morning, preparatory to his going to the cars, I relieved my breast by telling him what I had received.

"Oh, she is lost! lost! I feel it. I dreamed it. Oh, I must go through this humiliation! let me not survive it! If she is lost, may death put an end to our troubles."

It was only by telling him that the omnibus was waiting that I brought him out of his deep despondency.

"You are going with me," said he.

"I think it hardly necessary."

"You must go. Get ready. Do not deny me, I beseech you."

I had but a moment to decide; the driver was getting impatient, I filled a carpet bag with a few articles of clothing; took my cloak, and left. Oh! what mental agony, what torture of soul did that father suffer that day. If he had been following his dear child to her grave, it would not have been such unutterable grief as the horrid suspense that he endured.

We arrived at our destination at about ten o'clock at night. The night was as dark as blackness could make it. Thick clouds totally obscured the sky. A drizzling rain and a thick fog, seemed to make the darkness tangible. If ever fog was "cut with a knife," it was such fog as that. Thanks to the Metropolitan landlord, we found one of the "calves," waiting at the depot, wheelbarrow in hand, to save benighted wanderers from the perils of the storm. As some traveler on the icy Alps, overcome with fatigue, and hunger, and cold, rejoices at the sight of a noble St. Bernard, with the flask of wine and the bread tied round his

neck, so we rejoiced at the supposed presence of the Metropolitan calf, with its wheelbarrow, "supposed presence" we say,—for we only had the calf's word for it, it being so dark that we could not have distinguished said calf from the Metropolitan itself. We got to "our hotel," in a very aboriginal way, *to wit:* after the Mexican fashion of the livery-stable man, reserving the privilege of holding on to the tail of his hired mule. I took hold of the boy's cotton coat-tail with my left hand, and of Mr. Brandon's hand with my right. This would have been our programme, then, providing it had been light enough to be seen: First, wheelbarrow with baggage; second, Metropolitan calf; third, cotton coat-tail, followed by the travelers;—line of march,—as near the middle of "Only" street as our bovine pilot could keep.

The procession moved to the music of our footsteps splashing in the mud. Finally, by the aid of a dipped tallow candle, I saw the familiar faces of the two-ounce Elixirs of Life.

With no little bawling, the calf succeeded in making its progenitor conscious of the presence of travelers. We heard through the half-opened doors his nervous and short "What d'ye want! Put 'em to bed"—"bring the baggage in here." But the boy said, "they want to find where some folks live,—they want to find 'em to-night."

"Go-long,—tell 'em you can't find out till after breakfast. Put 'em to bed on the Metropolitan bedsteads,—may-be I can sell 'em a "right" in the morning; go-long and shet the door; don't stand there a-foolin' all night."

The boy came back to the bar-room with "Father says, he don't know any thing till after breakfast; but

he 'll take care of your baggage, and wants me to put you to bed."

"But your father must get up,—we must see him. Go and tell him so."

"No, I darsn 't."

The boy laid down on a bench, and in less than ten minutes was snoring a wheelbarrow-march. I should have insisted on "father's knowing something before breakfast," but the thought occurred to me, that, inasmuch as he was associated with this spiritual clique, he might, instead of assisting us, do us infinite harm; and I so told Mr. Brandon. No doubt, we might have bought him by a higher bid, but we had no time then for such negotiations. It seemed as though my companion could not endure the thought of resting till he had found the object of his search.

Having walked outside of the house to cool my fevered brain, I heard a singular noise at no great distance, as of horns and other musical instruments; but they were not in unison nor in time with each other; it appeared like a chaos of sounds, embracing every accidental combination that could be imagined. It appeared as though I were listening through a musical kaleidoscope. When I returned to the bar-room, I shook this out of the half-conscious boy,—"Them 's spirits a-playin' and blowin' over to the Spiritual Hall."

I put on a glazed cap and my cloak, and slipped out unseen by my companion, who was pacing the room half deranged by the cruel suspense he was obliged to endure.

Following the direction of the sounds, I groped my way to a small frame house, about eighteen feet square, from which the sounds proceeded. There was no window in the house, and but one door, which I ascertained by walking around it and feeling along its sides.

As I stood on one side of the house, I heard something like a rope gliding over the eaves. When it came within reach, I felt it, and found it was a rope-ladder. When it had reached the ground, I heard steps on the roof, and presently an object of some kind descended to the ground. Moved either by an irresistible influence or by presence of mind, of which I have no great amount, I grasped the object, saying:

"Hush! don't say a word! don't be alarmed!"

I grasped what proved to be a coat collar. An agitated voice, saying, "Let go,—What d'ye want," made it evident that it was not a disembodied spirit, but a body with a spirit, that was before me,—in a word, a man.

"Listen," said I, being satisfied that he was one of the wire-pullers of the establishment, "do you want some money? Let me into the secrets of this thing, and I will pay you well. I will not expose you. I know pretty much all about it, now. I know as well as yourself that it is all a humbug,—a trick to deceive the credulous. Take me up-stairs, and let me see the whole performance, and you shall have a ten-dollar gold piece; here, you can feel it; as soon as you have shown me all, it is yours. I am a perfect stranger here. I came on the up-train to-night, and am going away probably to-morrow; so you need have no fears of being exposed." The feeling the eagle seemed to have an electrical effect on him.

"Just wait a minute," said he, "till I get a ball of twine, and I will take you up; but you must go in with me and come out with me, so that no one will know it; for there are several more up there that help me. And you must not say a word,—sit perfectly still where I put you. I will seat you by a place made on

purpose, so that when there is a light below, you can see all that is going on."

I soon found myself seated near the scuttle-hole, in a low garret, in perfect darkness. I could hear the breathings of several persons in the garret, and the drawing of strings as over pulleys. Looking through a crack just before me, I had a fair view of all that was in the room below. There were some twenty or thirty persons in the room,—about an equal number of males and females. The first object that struck me,—and I came near exposing myself by an involuntary exclamation,—was Henriette! Yes, there she was,—my eyes could not be deceived; and there also was her evil genius—Landor!

Oh! poor, weak, confiding woman! No lesson is severe enough to teach you the inconstancy, the villainy of man. When he has struck you, it requires but a smile to efface the injury. You are constituted to trust in him though in defiance of the lessons of bitter experience. As often as he abuses you, so often do you forgive him. Though he cast you off, and trample you in the dust, still you twine around him and implore his mercy. Thou art an instrument in the hands of man, to be used as he desires. There seems to be no use in woman's struggling against the fate that has made her subservient to the will of man; for she can not contend against it,—she must succumb. There is an enchantment that draws woman toward her lord, that she can not resist, even though she be aware that he is her destroyer.

But a few weeks before, Henriette had been snatched from Landor's arms, on the very couch of infamy; and now I beheld her again, apparently entirely in his power. I looked for Matilda, and for the school-teacher, but they were not there,—my heart sank within me,—I felt that

all was lost! that the wiles of the libertine had at last triumphed, and that Henriette was lost,—lost to virtue,—to peace,—to every thing pure, and holy, and desirable on earth.

She sat by him on a cushioned bench, which ran around the side of the room, watching in mute astonishment the motions of the table, as it rose and fell, without any perceptible cause. Through the center of this table passed vertically a huge bar of iron. From what I could hear, there was a large magnet being moved in the garret, in the same manner as the one in the widow Moredock's room.

Landor's left arm encircled Henriette's slender waist; his right hand joined with her left. She leaned against his breast, seemingly in that visionary, half-conscious state, that I saw her in on the night of Guysot's death; and he was gazing on her angelic face and full round bosom, with the same lascivious, devouring gaze, as though he could scarcely restrain his animal passions.

I recognized another couple in that group; the preacher and Miss Callan. There was a sadness on her features that told, too plainly, that to her even the commencement of the path of sin had its thorns. The other persons in the room appeared, from their dress, to be inhabitants of the neighborhood.

CHAPTER XIX.

The Spirit of Dr. Rush. Prescribes for Matilda and the Schoolmaster. Singular Advice of the Spirit to Henriette. Spiritual Fanatics. Poor Henriette! An importunate Female Member. Three very interesting Spiritual Widows—Widow Blonde, Widow Openface, the consolable Widow Barnthistle. A sovereign remedy for Widows' Heart Wounds. Some Widowers to match. "Widowers' Evil;" its only cure. Advice to Married Men who expect to marry again. Marrying for a living. "Aunt Betties." How to tell an Old Maid. Extraordinary personal attraction of a Spinster. A selfish, sensual Man. The Lights blown out. How Spirits blow Horns and play on Fiddles. How Spiritual Hands and Arms are felt. The Meeting breaks up. Landor, the Medium, and Henriette, go off together.

THERE was a tall, lanksided woman with very sparo features, gray eyes, no teeth in front, who was twitching, and gaping, and shouting occasionally. She arose and commenced talking, with her eyes shut. Landor asked her "if the spirit of Doctor Rush was present; and if so, if he could consult him in reference to the brother and sister who now lay sick." The medium answered in the affirmative.

"I gave them the medicine you recommended last night, but they don't seem to be any better; they sleep continually."

"Continue the same medicine; it is necessary they should sleep two days yet. Then their disease will take a turn, and they will get well immediately; I had many such cases, while I was on earth, and I always succeeded in curing them by this medicine."

Henriette seemed to devour the words of the medium. She gazed on her with an intensity that involved her

whole being. Her lips moved, and she said, "Are you sure that Robert and Matilda will recover?" The medium paused, and the questioner held her breath. She turned pale. Answer her for God's sake, I almost exclaimed, for it seemed that Henriette could not breathe till the medium should speak. The medium answered. Oh, what relief! Henriette's deep chest heaved again, and with quick inspirations. "They will recover if they follow strictly my directions, but you must keep away from them; they must have nothing to excite them."

"Oh, how can I," the poor girl replied. "Oh, I will not disturb them; I will not say a word. And I know I can nurse them better than any one else. Oh! do let me be with them, I pray you," and she fell on her knees weeping, with clasped hands; her angelic, heaven-lit features, imploring this simple boon, as though her all depended on it.

"No;" the medium answered, sternly, with an angry expression, and a quick gesture of the hand, which none but the heart of a devil could have suggested.

"Do you want to kill your friends?"

"I tell you, their lives depend on your keeping away from them." Henriette sank to the floor. Landor raised her up, and bathed her face with water.

"Give her some wine," the medium said, sternly. "Woman," she continued, "you grieve my spirit to anger. I command you to stop these silly actions, and obey me or you will be cursed with afflictions tenfold worse than you now experience."

This brought her to a state of consciousness; she drank the wine they gave her, mechanically, and sat with silent tongue and vacant stare; at intervals she drew a quick, tremulous sigh through her expanded

nostrils, heaving convulsively her deep chest, as a slumbering infant with trouble in its dawning mind. There were three or four women in the room who appeared to be near the same age (on the moss side of thirty), and whose actions were much the same; one of them, of small stature; light, clear complexion; very light-brown hair, and a light-blue eye, was attracted most powerfully to a young man, some five or six years her junior, and the opposite as to the color of his eyes and hair. He wore a dark, heavy imperial; the kind that excites passional electricity so powerfully when rubbed over a female cheek. The little blonde was dressed in black, as were also the other ladies above-mentioned. She seemed bound to take advantage of the ladies' privilege of "leap year," to do the courting; for never did I see a more importunate female lover (or, perhaps, more properly—loveress). She almost abashed the object of her attentions. Another of these females was a middle-sized woman, gray eyes (I think), lips that pouted rather too much; in fact, their pout bordered hard on to a flab; their rubyness had departed long ago; she had a kind of yellowish, sandy-colored hair, which was made to form two large wings, or Brazilian bat's-ears, on each side of the forehead. They resembled little sheds I have seen, before now, stuck on the south-side of barns for cattle to get under in stormy weather. She had a tolerable good set of teeth in front; the back ones being out, which fact was easily ascertained when she laughed, which she did continually. She had an oscillating motion of the head, and of the whole body, particularly of the hips,—which showed an internal uneasiness or itching somewhere,—much as if she felt a flea creeping up her back. Her voice was loud, garrulous, chachinnatory, running, spiral-fountain like, a continuous stream.

Another of these spiritual light artillery women was more sedate; she was dressed in black; indeed, she would have one think, she was melancholy; grieving and inconsolable for some dear object, which she once possessed; some dear Captain Barnthistle for instance. That the longing for a new object to be loved was paramount to grieving for the object that was loved, stuck out in bold relief. The widow's—(there I have let it out, what I did not intend to do—that I believed these gallant female characters were young widows), the widow's face, then, said, as plain as a subdued smile shining through a dissolving cloud of grief, could say, "I am very sorrowful, very,—I never can get entirely over grieving for my dear Captain Barnthistle; but still, I am getting to be consolable, at times, and I think if I had some sober, pious companion, some dear brother (that is, using the word brother in an associative sense) I could be entirely consoled." And so meek and downcast were her deep, dark eyes, and her whole demeanor, that no wonder one of the "brothers aforesaid was doing his best, with ameliorating words" and elongated physiognomy, to pour oil over the terrible but healing wounds of the disconsolate widow's heart. Our word for it, she will recover, and scarce a scar will tell where the lacerations were;—of such powerful efficacy is the oil of human sympathy, compared with which all other oils, such as sweet oil, corn oil, turkey grease or Mustang liniment, are as nothing. I have seen widows' hearts, before now, that were one entire mass of ruins,—torn so that they could not bleed,—restored in an astonishingly short period of time, by the application of this oil. There were some four or five other characters, closely resembling the three widows in actions, but they wore forked garments, instead of petticoats. That

these, like the dear widowed ewes of the flock, were roaming over the barren hills of single cursedness, finding only now and then a green spot at which to refresh their famishing natures, was evident. Having formerly fed in the evergreen fields of matrimony, continually up to their eyes in clover,—and ever within hearing of the sweet rippling of their meadow brook,—and of late being cut completely off from clover and brooks, with nothing but dews and accidental showers to cool their parched thirst, no wonder that they rushed headlong into the first stream, and thrust their noses clear under water, in their avidity to quench that insatiate burning. Many are inclined to laugh at the absurdities of widowers. But let them experience that gnawing at the stomach, for a limited time, that poor widowers have to endure for years, and they will rather pity them. This "widower's evil," comes from a want of exercise of the wooing powers during his matrimonial somnolency. Like a lawyer, long out of practice,—not posted up as to new laws and precedents,—and his tongue stiff from disuse, the poor widower enters the bar, the second time, a perfect laughing-stock for every insignificant, beardless sprig. It is our advice to those entering the matrimonial harbor, and casting anchor, to remember,—and especially if their prize be a fashionably built and managed clipper,—that circumstances might arise rendering it necessary to raise anchor, and sail again on the rough sea of adventure in search of another prize,—and still another, perhaps.

I will tell you a secret, if you won't tell anybody;—let me have your ear, so as to whisper it. Marry a fashionable lady,—the more fashionable the better,—so that the "pile," be of the right size;—let her have her own way,—have her go to balls and theaters every

night,—if possible, don't let her take any exercise;—keep her shut up in a dark room during daylight;—you need not sew her eyes up as a Dutchman does the eyes of his big livered goose;—keep her on the richest and most stimulating food and drinks;—admire the color of a potatoe vine growing in the cellar,—the angelic waist of the wasp;—impress on her mind that nervous debility, furred tongues and "hysterics," are peculiarly feminine;—I say, marry a fashionable wife with the right sort of a "pile," and have her follow this regime (but be careful not to follow it yourself) and you may get rich following matrimony for a living. You may count on getting four or five "piles," at least.

Such great improvements have been made, of late, in the plastic art and in supplying teeth, eyes, hair, changing pale cheeks to red,—wrinkled to smooth,—gray hairs and whiskers to black, that you stand a good chance of getting the last pile at fifty, if you can only walk erect and have "pretty good bottom."

Taking this view of the matter, it is not a bad idea to keep your hand in the practice of wooing, even after you marry;—if you can't find any more agreeable subject to practice on, use your wife. Go over one of the lessons occasionally, that you practiced in good earnest while courting her,—so that when she has been humored and pampered to death, you can commence wooing again without making yourself ridiculous.

Next to the widows, in garrulity, were two or three very thin spindle-waisted, collapsed-faced spinsters,—there was no mistake about their being old maids; they can not disguise the fact. There are certain infallible signs pertaining to all "Aunt Betties," that can not be mistaken. When you see a horse stop dead still in the road and turn his head round to look at the driver,

you may swear he is an inveterate balker; so when you see a very thin woman, her waist as small and round as a rolling pin,—her arms long and thin, with fingers to match,—her visage sharp and angular,—her mouth ever primped,—not to be drawn out into a smile, except at very legitimate wit,—her hair combed smoothly down, not a solitary hair out of its place,—her collar adjusted by the level and cross hairs of that pair of infallible optical theodolites of hers,—not a wrinkle in her dress,—not an atom of dust on her dazzling white handkerchief; in a word, her whole exterior arranged to a hair and a thread, saying, as plainly as it could say, "we are not to be ruffled:"—when you meet with these symptoms you may safely pronounce the case spinsterism.

And what heart has courage to approach one of these fortifications. We once saw an unfortunate wretch so far forget himself as to storm such a battery. Putting his arm around her waist, he became fastened there by the punctures of a hundred pins,—and such a squawling and scratching, and such a looking of daggers! and there the poor fellow was, the pins tearing his flesh and he not able to disengage himself; out of sympathy for our crucified brother, we cried "hold her close to you, is your only chance;" he took the hint, and need we say what followed;—she fainted (?)—of course.

There were three or four of this class in the spiritual room, though they were not so staid and repellant as spinsters generally are. One tall shitepoke-bodied specimen, with black hair and codfish face, and bright eye and white wax teeth, was quite relaxed from her spinster rigidity: she allowed her nicely plaited and embroidered jacket to be sadly wrinkled by a sturdy arm that encircled her waist; and that starched and

nicely-worked collar was quite displaced and turned up by her head resting on his breast. It was rather a phenomenon to see a female leaning up to such a rough masculine. It was like a delicate honeysuckle running up the side of a shellbark hickory. He was hard featured, hairy, uncombed, and his mouth was a reeking pool of tobacco juice; his eye and face indicated that his heart had never felt a tender passion or a soft emotion; every thing with him was selfish gratification; the idea that any loftier principle could animate the human breast, was a "humbug" with him;—and yet so powerfully equalizing was the electrical atmosphere of the room, that it caused these two, such decided opposites, to flow together.

Great and potent beyond all other powers, is this spiritual electricity, assimilating natures the most incompatible.

The medium, who still was under spiritual influence, said that other physical demonstrations, beside the moving of tables, would be given if the lights were blown out. One of the brothers extinguished the candles. I had noticed before several horns hanging up round the room. No sooner were the lights blown out, than I heard a drawing of strings through the floor, and a faint click as of tin vessels touching the ceiling,—then there was a hideous commingling of hoarse, discordant voices, which seemed to originate in the garret and to grow louder and less distinct as they issued in the room below. The voices stopped,—there was another drawing of strings and a slight shuffling in the garret. I heard below, noises like hollow, resonant bodies clasping gently together. The medium said:

"Reach forth your hands, and feel."

Quick exclamations from female voices followed: "I felt a guitar,"—"I felt a violin,"—"I'm sure, I felt a human hand."

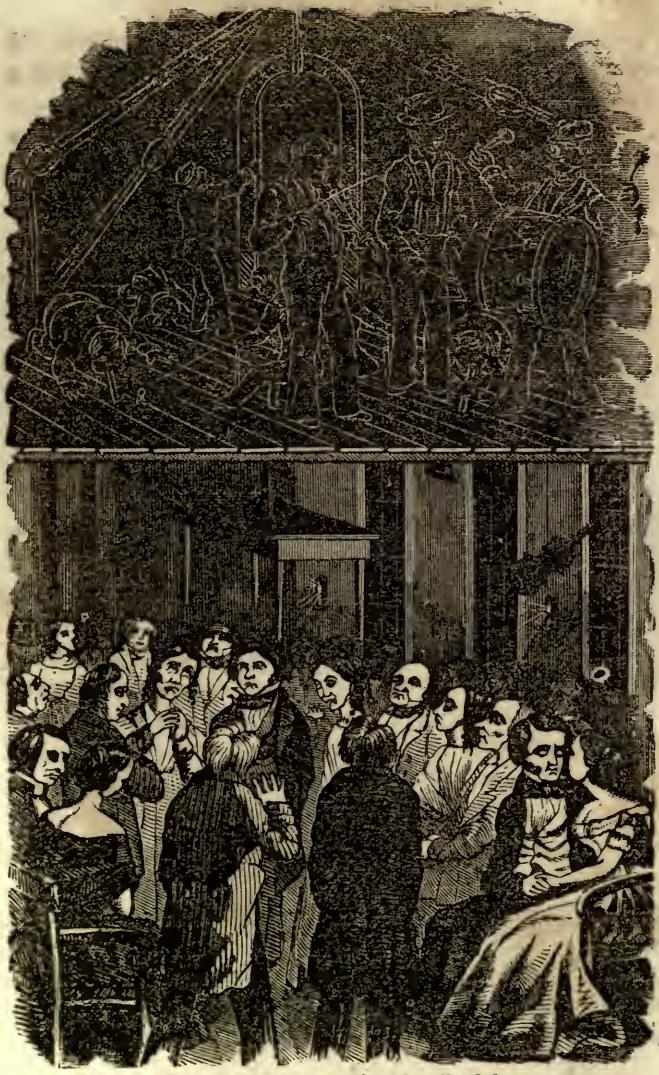
I heard something fall at my side. I felt it. It was the hand, no doubt, that the person below had felt. It was a stuffed bag in the shape of a hand and arm, covered with some satin-like substance; the bones, however, were wanting.

Musical sounds were now heard, and tunes were played on violins, drums, and triangles. These sounds originated in the garret. "Oh dears!" and "Oh mys!" and "My Gods," were now as plentiful as musquetoes in a July evening.

The music stopped, and the candles were lit again. Henriette seemed to have become composed, though she sat with melancholy, stupid stare, her eyes cast on the floor. I noticed Miss Callan sitting near her reverend seducer; she appeared melancholy and absent-minded, as though her thoughts were wandering elsewhere than on the fantastic group around her; she perhaps was thinking of her girlhood's home, when innocence, and virtue, and happiness were hers;—of a mother who watched over her in sickness and health,—whose ear was ever open to her daughter's voice, either in the busy bustlings of the day or in the still oblivion of night; that mother whose unwearied hand was always ready to prepare her for school, or for Sunday school, or for church; that mother that learned her to say, each night:

"Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray thee, Lord, my life to keep;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to take."

And where was that home now; where that mother!



THE SPIRITUALISTS' HALL.

Oh! she was miserable;—she felt how lost she was,—how cheaply she had sold her happiness,—her all. Verily "the way of the transgressor is hard! the wages of sin is death! The medium here indicated that no more demonstrations would take place that night, and having been released of the spirit, sat down by Landor.

"Will you go home with me, Miss Brandon?" she asked; "the spirits say it is not good for you to be with the invalids."

"Oh! how can I? It is too much to ask of me. I will not disturb them. I will not go in the room where they lie. If I can only be in the house, that I may know how they are, and do every thing that I can to help them."

"We have had directions, that it is not good for you to be with them. You can not know what is for their good, as well as the spirit of the greatest of physicians. It is not right for you to wish to do your friends harm, if their company is agreeable to you.

"I must yield; but, oh! it is like taking me from the world,—from every friend,—to keep me away from them. Oh! that I had never left my father's house. What other trials am I yet to pass through!"

"Henriette, it is wrong, very wrong for you to worry yourself in this manner,—you will be sick yourself the next thing you know; beside, I don't think it very grateful for you to intimate that you have but two friends in the world. I am sure that there are others who have tried, by every means in their power, to make themselves your friends; and is this the way they are to be rewarded? Rather poor encouragement, I must confess."

Henriette dropped her head in her hands and wept. Landor gave the medium a pleased, significant look over Henriette's shoulder, as much as to say, "This is

the right string to touch;—her sense of gratitude will make her yield. Let us appear to do her all the favors we can, and she will not resist our wishes. Her grateful heart will not let her deny us."

"Come, let's go," said Landor. "Will you take my arm, Mrs. Madden?—and you, Henriette? It 's a fine thing we brought an umbrella to-night, or we all should have got a good ducking," said Landor, in a laughing manner, ill-becoming the deep depression that bore down the gentle being by his side.

"Yes indeed!" chimed in Mrs. Madden, with a forced laugh that a hell-hag might chatter over a victim about to be damned. The three left the hall, being the last of the company.

I was touched on the shoulder, and immediately I followed my guide down the rope-ladder. I slipped the piece of money in his hand and hastened after the light (which Landor carried), as it slowly penetrated the thick darkness.

CHAPTER XX.

The Medium. Mrs. Madden's House. A Drunken Visitor. Horrid Plot of Poisoning revealed. Two Assistants admitted. The Preacher again. A terrible Dilemma. Imploring Divine assistance. Landor confident of the consummation of his bliss; his deceptive appeal to Henriette. Davison's fidelity impeached. A forged Letter. A gross act of Brutality about to be committed. The Narrator. Recognition. A fierce Struggle. Henriette's supplications for her Friend. A conscience-stricken Man. The Red-Man. His cruel alternative to Henriette. Her sacrifice to save her Friend. A moment of unutterable Agony. Death of the Feelings. A desperate attempt to Escape frustrated.

THE three entered a small cottage, having two front rooms, into one of which the front door opened; from this room a door opened into the other front room, in which was a fire, and a light burning. The curtains

were not drawn when I first entered, and I could see that it was a very comfortable apartment; having a carpet, lounges, easy-chairs, and a bed in one corner, with snow-white pillows and counterpane. I heard a footstep approaching from behind. I stepped round the corner of the house. There was an irregular rapping on the door. Landor came out, asking, "Who's there?"

"Its m-m-me."

"Why, Jack, I 'm astonished that you 've left your business to come here; what 's the matter? I 'm afraid you 've been drinking, Jack."

"N-n-no-sir–ee. I 'll l-l-lam you, if you—(hic)—c-c-cast up any such in-in-sinuations as-tha—(hic)—that."

"Oh, I did not mean any offense, but, you know, I am depending a great deal on you, and if you should neglect your duty, it would frustrate all my plans. You are all right enough, Jack, but I do ask of you, as a favor, that you won't drink any more to night; for if you can only keep them asleep to night, it will all be over. How are they getting along,—and how long since you left them, Jack?"

"Oh, I guess—(hic)—guess it 's been 'bout c-cu-couple of hours, by the way I—(hic)—feel."

"You haven't got any liquor with you, have you, Jack?"

"N-n-no only what I 've-g-got in he—(hic)—here. I couldn't stand it si-si-sittin' up to night, without one h-ho-horn any how, but it 'll all gi-git worked—(hic)—(hic)—out on the road, for its aw-awful rainy and gla-glary to-night."

"I 'm afraid they 'll wake up before you get back."

"No they w-wo-won't, for I give 'em a he-he-h—l of a dose before I left."

"But what did you come here for, Jack?"

"'Cause, I wanted to l-l-let ye know 'twas all r-r—(hic)—right, as yer left leg."

"Well, get back as soon as you can, Jack."

"Y-ye-yes, of course, I will."

He was no sooner gone, than two men were admitted, by Landor, at the front door.

"I don't know as I shall need you to-night," he said, in a low voice, "but I want you here. I am a-going to bring this thing to a head to-night. I am a-going to accomplish my object by fair means or foul. And it shall be done to-night; there never will be a more favorable opportunity. No one here to disturb us, and no danger of being heard from without, this rainy night; and her friends are so fast asleep that they will not even dream of us."

"Yes, if you are determined to carry out your plans, you will probably not have a better time," one of the men replied, whose voice I recognized as the preacher's.

"I am very sorry to keep you from your charming Ada to-night, Mr. Falleau, but may-be we can spare you before morning. Take off your boots here, at the door, and go up-stairs in your stocking feet. There is a candle burning at the head of the stairs; go in the room to the right, and you will find a bed;—lie down with your clothes on; if you hear a bell ring, come down into the room below."

Stillness again prevailed. I went round to the window, but the curtains were drawn. What was I to do? I dared not leave Henriette. I did think of groping my way back to the tavern, get help and rescue her at once; but then, it was so dark that I could not distinguish an object a rod from me, and I could not see another light anywhere.

If I should venture away from the house, I should probably lose myself entirely. The thought occurred to me of alarming the neighborhood, by crying murder! at the top of my voice. But then this might be the means of stopping my voice entirely; for, if these men should find me here to-night, following their steps, and trying to snatch their coveted prize from them, the second time, I fear it will go hard with me; inasmuch as I have no weapons with me, and it is probable I am not able to master either one of them by main strength. What to do I knew not. A struggle with these fellows, under such unfavorable circumstances, must result in my death, with probably no good to her whom I wish to save. The prospect was gloomy. A rescue seemed hopeless. A stream of light darted through my mind, overshadowed with the thick gloom around me. Is there not a God! an invisible, all-powerful being! who causes the weak to triumph over the mighty! These questions streamed, like rays of Divine light, on my soul. I had been in dark situations before, where every thing was gloomy and hopeless; I had asked assistance of God, whose ear is ever open to the petitions of his creatures. I always felt that my petitions were answered. The path always seemed brighter, the obstacles less formidable after an earnest, confiding prayer to the Almighty. I raised my soul, wicked and unworthy as it was, in humble and earnest supplication to the throne of Heaven. I wrestled in agony of spirit for the blessing, for assistance in this trying situation. "It is not for me, unworthy and thankless as I am, that I implore thine assistance, oh, God! but for a pure, innocent being,—defenseless, in the hands of the destroyer,—about to be immolated on the altar of lust." I felt

stronger; there seemed to be an assurance in my breast that virtue should triumph.

By trying the front door, I found it was ajar, so perfectly secure in the possession of his victim, did Landor feel. There seemed to be no margin for a failure. This long and patient labor is about to be rewarded with the prize for which he has contended. I stepped inside the room. Feeling a large cloak hanging up near the door opening into the room where Landor and his company were, I risked concealing myself behind it, in case any one should enter the room. In the middle of the upper panel of the door was a single pane of glass, over the inside of which a green silk curtain played, fastened with rings on a couple of wires. This curtain was about half drawn over the glass, affording me a view of the entire inside of the room. Landor and Henriette were there alone, sitting near the fire; she was gazing vacantly at the burning wood,—despair was depicted in her pale face. Landor gradually drew his chair near her, and was speaking with the tenderest words, and tenderest looks he was master of, gazing upon her with devouring intensity.

Seeming to catch a favorable expression, he grasped each of her hands in his, and fell on his knees before her, saying, "Henriette, I love you more than any other being on earth. Oh, you do not know how my heart,—my soul,—my all is yours! Can not I have a return for my love? Don't refuse me;—it will be my death-blow." As if startled by some warning voice, she drew suddenly back from him.

"I can not, Landor;—your wife!—your family!"

"Did I not tell you, I have a divorce from my wife? Did I not tell you, I never loved her!—that she drew

me into a difficulty, and then appealed to my honor to save her from disgrace? And did I not tell you how I lived a living death with her, till I found she was false to me? And now I am divorced,—I am free. If you do not believe it, here is the article," drawing a paper from his pocket. "Here is my bill of divorce," and reading it, I noticed there was no Court seal on the document.

"But my heart belongs to another, Landor. I can respect you as a friend, for the kindness you have shown me, but my heart is not mine to give."

A deep glare of hatred gleamed in Landor's eye; but neither his voice nor face betrayed it. He knew the female heart too well to try (if it could be avoided) to degrade the object of her love; for this would excite her disgust and anger against him and bind her more closely to the object of her affections.

"Yes," he said, "Davison is a very good sort of a fellow, but I don't believe he will ever live to be your husband."

Henriette started back, shocked at this dreadful announcement.

"It can not be; you jest, sir. Do not trifle with me in this manner."

What a piercing, anxious look she directed on him; her whole soul was concentrated in that searching glance. With clasped hands and pallid cheek, scarcely breathing, she whispered:

"You are not in earnest, sir; you can not be. Oh! don't torture me with such trifling. I must go and see him." She sprang to the bureau where her shawl and bonnet lay.

I was satisfied, from the outbursting of her feelings,

that her heart was Davison's; that her short acquaintanceship with him had resulted in deep affection.

Landor saw the mistake he had made. He could not appreciate the depth of woman's love. He had gone too far, and correcting himself, he said:

"Oh, fie! Henriette. I was only jesting. He is doing well enough; so put down your things, and make yourself contented. You would look nice, going three miles through mud, knee-deep, such a night as this."

"Oh! why did you talk so?" she asked, laughing and crying hysterically, the tears glistening in her glad eyes, that made her beauty more fascinating than ever.

"I am not sorry I alarmed her," thought the gloating libertine. "I never saw her so bewitchingly lovely before." That this thought was in his mind was evident, as he gazed with sensual satisfaction in her face, radiant as a May morn glittering with brilliant dewdrops.

"Sit down, my pretty bird, and compose yourself," he tenderly and smilingly said, putting his arm around her waist and taking hold of her hand.

"I don't feel like talking any more;—let me go to my room," she said, gently withdrawing herself from his embrace.

Landor half dropped his head, as if in uncertainty what to do. Henriette was about leaving the room at the back door. My heart ceased its beatings, in anxiety for her departure. I almost exclaimed aloud:—"Be quick,—fly,—or you are lost." Her hand was on the latch;—she raised it;—the click started Landor;—he rose up quickly.

"See here, Henriette!"

"Oh! I want to go."

"Come back one moment. I have something import-

ant to tell you. Come and sit down a moment," taking her hand and leading her reluctantly back to the chair. "I have something very disagreeable to tell you. I don't know whether you will believe me or not; but I think it my duty to tell you, before it goes any further. To be brief,—Davison is false to you;—he is deceiving you;—he has a wife living in New Jersey.

"It is false!" Henriette exclaimed, rising to her feet, her eyes flashing with anger, that I supposed could not exist there.

"I expected you would not believe me," Landor coolly replied; "but sit down and I will soon convince you that it is true. Just sit down a moment, till I return."

He lit another candle and came into the room where I was. Going to the farther end of the room, he opened a desk and commenced writing; having finished, he blew the paper, holding it to the candle to dry; then he put it in an envelope and wrote on the envelope, afterward tearing its edges to make it look as though it had been sealed and opened. Having dried the ink he returned to Henriette, who was walking the room, wringing her hands in silent agony, breathing in an almost inaudible whisper. "It can not be. No, I will not believe it. I can not believe it."

"Here is a letter I put in my pocket inadvertently, yesterday, as I was dosing out some medicine for Davison. I took up the letter from the floor, tore off a piece to put some medicine in, and put the rest in my pocket. I accidentally looked at it afterward, and found, to my surprise, that it was from Davison's wife, reproving him for his neglect of her. I will read it,—sit down."

"No, I don't want to see it; take it away," she gasped, and staggered helplessly backward.

Landor caught her and bore her to a lounge. I saw

by the devilish, beastly lust glaring in his eye, that he was drunk with passion. It was evident that he would seize this auspicious moment to consummate his brutal desires; while his victim was insensible and incapable of resistance. He unpinned the cape that covered her white shoulders, and gently passed his hand in her bosom.—As a surgeon feels the most sensitive part of his patient, when administering chloroform, to learn when there is complete insensibility, so Landor, would learn the effect of the agent he had used, more stupefying than chloroform.

She involuntarily grasped his hand and shrieked.

I could be still no longer. I took no thought of consequences, but rushed in the room. Landor turned on me. He knew me.

For a moment we silently stood, face to face. Henriette, restored from her swoon, recognized me.

"Oh! —— she shrieked, calling me by name, God has sent you to save me," and she grasped my knees in ecstasy.

Landor recovered his presence of mind, and rang the bell. I heard the men coming down the steps.—What should I do? They came into the room. Landor now took courage.

"Here is that cursed hound that has dogged my steps everywhere; he 's continually sticking his infernal nose into my business. Let 's make an end of him now."

"Oh, mercy! mercy!" screamed Henriette.

"Shut your mouth, hussy,—or I 'll break your head," growled Landor, making an attempt to grasp a chair.

"What shall we do with the d—d scoundrel?"

The companion of the preacher, a short, thick-set man with red whiskers, red face, red nose, yellowish red eyes,—the very impersonation of brutality and crime,

raised his chin and drew his extended fore-finger significantly across his throat.

"Enough said," take hold of him, cried Landor, preferring the red-man should have the job.

"Oh, don't,—don't hurt him; save him! Oh, do save him; oh, do save him, won't you!" begged, Henriette.

"Down with him," shouted, Landor; and for his part he dragged Henriette away, holding his hand firmly over her mouth, for she uttered screams for mercy, that would have pierced any heart, but a demon's. The red-man seized me, calling on the preacher to help him. They overcame me, and with handkerchiefs tied my feet together, and my hands behind me, and they tied one over my mouth. They also tied Henriette in the same manner.

I could see that this was hard work for the preacher; his heart had not become sufficiently calloused to do this business with alacrity.

"Come in the other room," said Landor. They left; closing the door after them. I could hear part of their conversation, at times.

"You haven't got the pluck of a sheep," said the voice of the red-man; "leave it to me; I'll do it. Just let me fix it, and you may bet your life it'll be done right."

"Oh, this is horrible," said another voice, which was the conscience-stricken preacher's. "I wish I were out of it."

"Come along, baby ——;" and I heard footsteps going out of the front door. I saw by the reflection of a light through the window that they carried a lantern.

"Do it up right, Lu," I heard Landor say from without.

"Ay, ay, never fear," said the red-man from the

door. Presently he came in, and taking hold of my collar, dragged me to the farther part of the other room, and then returned, drawing the door to after him.

I worked myself to the door; it was not quite closed; I raised myself to my feet, and could see and hear what passed in the room. The red-man, standing over Henriette, was saying: "Henriette, if you 'll agree to talk low, and not to scream, I 'll untie the handkerchief from your mouth; but if you holler, I 'll tie it tighter than ever." With this, he took the handkerchief off.

"Do you want to save this fellow's life," said he, rudely shaking her by the shoulder.

"His life! what mean you? You surely would not harm him! I beg you——"

"Hush, and hear what I have to say; you can save this fellow's life in one way, and no other; consent to be Landor's wife. Tell this fellow so, and that it is your own free will; and ask him to leave you, and not to say any thing about it to any one, and his life shall be saved, and you shall live in the first style. What do you say? If you consent, you must become Landor's wife to-night. He must have the right of a husband before we will let this fellow go. What do you say? I give you but ten minutes for an answer. If you refuse, this bottle of heaven-drops shall put him to sleep, so that he will never wake. And you then shall be Landor's, whether you will or not; and instead of being his wife, you shall be his mistress; do you hear?" he said, with a savage accent to his voice, and a demoniac glare in his bloodshot eyes. "If I was Landor, I wouldn't bother with you in this way. I would like your resistance all the better; it would add flavor to the draught. Come, make up your mind, quick; for if I stand here my passions may make me cheat Landor out of his

rights. I will give you ten minutes to decide. Will you be Landor's wife? and save the life of this fellow, who has risked it for you, or will you kill him, and be Landor's slave? Ten minutes, I say;" and he drew out an old bull's-eye watch; "it is now fifteen minutes past one; may-be your mind 's made up, and don't want to wait. Will you be Landor's wife?"

She raised her head, but oh! what an expression of agony was depicted in her face, as she fell before this brute, and plead with him. How did those soul-speaking eyes implore his mercy! Even *his* brute heart understood them. "You needn't look good at me; there 's no use of your taking on, and begging that way; you can't move me. I shall do just what I say, and man or devil can't stop me. I 'm glad it rains to-night, for there's no danger of any one bothering me. No human being but ourselves can know what happens here. Landor and the preacher have gone. They have left it to me; they know I will not flinch." If possible this added another pang to her sufferings. She turned her eyes upward, as if in prayer; and I joined my silent prayer with hers. "My God, hast thou forsaken us; oh, help, save us!" My soul plead as never before; and light seemed to break in on it. I seemed to have an assurance that we should be delivered.

"Understand too, Miss," her tormentor continued, "you refuse, and I am obliged to stop this fellow's wind; you will be kept confined, away from the world, a prisoner, so that you can not testify against us. So make up your mind, quick. You have only two minutes more."

Those two moments were moments of unutterable agony; they were to give me life or death; they were to give her worse than death. She had no alternative. Infinitely worse were her prospects than mine. Her

fearful suspense was broken in upon by the monster's voice, for he appeared now to be an incarnate devil, sent to torment her.

"The time 's up." Henriette shrieked with terror. Gazing into the monster's face, with the intense stare of a maniac.

Putting the watch into his pocket, with "What d'ye say," he commenced rolling up his sleeves, and stepping round as if he were about to undertake some ordinary work.

During the last terrible moments, Henriette wept and raved, except when checked by her persecutor, like one deranged. She plead and begged with all her soul, to be spared this humiliation, but in vain. As well might she have plead with a tiger over its bleeding prey.

"Will you be Landor's wife or not? I can't wait any longer," and he turned toward the door.

"Oh! stop," she exclaimed; "do with me what you will, but save him."

This final conquest was a blow that severed every hope of peace to her on earth. Her heart seemed to sink at the awful thought of what she had consented to do. She closed her eyes; overcome by such inhuman barbarity. The monster returned to her side, and puting his hand roughly on her shoulder, said: "I understand that you consent to become Landor's wife to-night, willingly, without any objections or fuss about it; and that you tell this fellow that it is of your own free will; that you love Landor, and want to be his wife; that you will do all this in good spirits; and that you will never say you were forced into it. Do I understand you to consent to all this?" She closed her eyes and bowed her head; she seemed to have passed the ordeal; her feelings were seared, as the feeling of the sensitive nerve is

destroyed by the hot iron; her spirits seemed to have been killed by the iron cruelty with which it had been pierced; the dreadful gulf was passed; she was resigned to her fate, dreadful though it was. No searings could now affect her deadened spirit.

Oh, what an awful condition is that in which the feelings are killed! What awful sufferings must that being go through before this death takes place! how lamentable the condition; and, how unutterably infernal the fiends, that can coolly crucify and sear the spirit to death!

"Listen," said he, rousing her by another rough shake. "I am going after Landor, and Mrs. Madden, and the preacher; this friend of yours will be brought into the room, and the preacher will marry you;—will you be pleasant; and say that you are willing? Recollect, if you don't, we shall not give you another chance."

She bowed assent. I crept from the door; the red-man left the house. I worked my way to the door again and opened it by hooking the latch in the handkerchief that was over my mouth. I got near to Henriette and succeeded in untieing her hands; she then loosed her feet and my hands, although her agitation and hurry made her slow in doing it. We were now freed except for the bandages around my feet, and I was just untieing them, she whispering "hurry,—hurry," and hardly knowing what she was about.

I had the knot loosened,—when,—death to our hopes! the door opened, and our persecutors entered.

"Jump through the window," I cried to Henriette. But she stood speechless, helpless, paralyzed with terror! like the miserable dreamer in some nightmare, seeing horrid and inevitable death before him, but unable to move from it.

"D—n your ungrateful heart," yelled the red monster, the fires of hell glaring in his lurid eye,—"I'll fix you," he muttered, dragging me from the room. Henriette threw herself on his arms screaming "Mercy! mercy! Oh, save him! I will do any thing you say, Oh save him!" Landor and the preacher interfered and the brute relaxed his grasp.

CHAPTER XXI.

Change of Policy. A gloomy Marriage Feast; The Ceremony. A hopeless Intervention. The Narrator summarily dealt with. The Death Struggle. The Spirit World. A Delightful Vision. Davison's Escape. How he comes to the Narrator's assistance. His Story. Some good that Whisky did. Spiritual Medicine. Providential Interference. Rendering thanks to God. Matilda. A Sad Sight. A Poisoned Woman. How News circulates in a little Town. How Neighbors' characters are found out. Mrs. Labial and "Neighbor-over-the-fence." The Town Pump. "Mrs. Labial" "makes tracks." The Story about Jack. The astonishment and horror of the Burghers at the late Tragedy. Judge Lynch. "The Birds are flown." "Sloping."

"ARE you willing to do as you agreed?" said Landor in a bland voice to her.

"Yes, oh, yes! I will do any thing."

I attempted to speak, but the brute struck me on the mouth, saying, "D—n you, dry up."

"Let him alone," said Landor; "it will all be right yet;" and then he addressed me with singular politeness;—"excuse us, sir, for being so rude with you; but you know how one's passions will sometimes run away with their better judgment. Come, let's all make up friends, and bring this unpleasant affair to a pleasant termination." Saying this, he unbound my feet, and by the pleasantest and most affectionate language, tried

to gain me over to his cause. "Come in the other room, and let's have some refreshments." He called Mrs. Madden, who had fled to the back room, to bring in some wine and cake. Henriette, although trying to appear composed, was consumed with horrid anticipations of what was to follow. She forced down, at their urgent solicitation, a few mouthfuls of cake and a few swallows of wine. Landor and his preacher, and Mrs. Madden, tried their best to make themselves agreeable; but how jarring, how revolting were their jests and laughter,—they added poignancy to the iron grief that already tore the heart of Henriette. She sat as an automaton, doing as she was bid. Her spirit was gone; despair had taken its place; she was prepared to do implicitly the will of her destroyers. The muscle man sat silently eating and drinking with a cloud overshadowing his visage; he seemed angry that he had been cheated of his prey.

The wine now began to make itself manifest in the increased talk,—flushed faces,—the gloating animal eyes. Landor gave a significant look and nod to the preacher, who, rising to his feet steadying himself by a chair, said: "Well, I suppose, we might as well go through with this ceremony, as it is getting late; or, rather,—getting early; and, for one, I feel as if I wanted some sleep. Mrs. Madden, will you act as bridemaid; and you, sir, addressing me, as bridegroom?"

I could say nothing. I sat as if bound powerless to my seat.

"Let the sulky alone," muttered Lu, "I'm at your service."

'Come," said the preacher, lifting me by the arm.

"Do as they say," spoke Henriette, pale and trembling, the drops of agony starting from her bloodless brow.

Mrs. Madden supported her as she stood, like an unconscious statue. The preacher took her resistless hand, and joined it with Landor's, repeating this brief ceremony:

"Do you take this woman for your lawful wife?" Landor answered, Yes. "Do you take this man to be your lawful husband?" He stopped for an answer. A more deathly paleness came over those angelic features. Her soul seemed to be struggling in throes of mortal agony. She leaned on her supporter, her bloodless lips parted,—she was about to seal her doom.

"No!" I shouted, springing to my feet, and felling Landor with a blow. Again I was seized, amid screams, and yells, and curses. I was knocked down and dragged from the room, the blood trickling down my neck. The fiend who was thirsting for my life, drew a knife from his bosom, and raised it to thrust in my breast;—I saw it glitter over me. Oh! what thoughts rushed through my mind, in that instant; an age was lived over;—my whole life was spread out before me. It were vain to attempt describing the feelings, when on the brink of eternity,—stepping from life to immortality. Is there a life beyond the grave? Yes,—I know there is,—I saw it,—I almost breathed its air.

Had I been the stubbornest of skeptics, that view of immortality would have banished all skepticism from my mind. The knife descended like a gleam of lightning; it struck my watch, and glanced again. I summoned all my strength. I grasped the knife, its edge cutting to the bone of my hand; but I held it. I was alone with my murderer. Landor and the preacher had shut the door on us, not wishing to see the bloody tragedy. I wound my left hand in my antagonist's neck-tie. I twisted it with the grip of death. Thus we struggled.

I was growing faint from loss of blood,—my grasp was relaxing,—I fell,—a crash,—a dead blow. The red face of my murderer disappeared, and the face of a savior came in its place.—The world seemed to pass away,—a cloud passed over me,—and all was dark. Is this death! Am I in the spirit-land! Oh, what singular feelings, when I awoke to consciousness. It was like waking from a horrid nightmare; the mind confused and uncertain whether it be in a real or imaginary existence.

The first thought that struggled in my mind was,—am I dead! Gradually, objects,—material objects, revealed themselves to my vision. I beheld, indistinctly,—as through a mist,—anxious faces bending over me,—Davison and Mr. Brandon,—with starting eyes, and parted lips, as if quivering on the cruel spear of suspense. Henriette, with clasped hands, and upturned eyes,—her very soul speeding heaven-ward in silent supplication.

I felt a chafing on my temples and arms; the familiar odor of camphor greeted my nostrils,—I came to complete consciousness; I was, indeed, on this side the grave. I now began to feel pain in my hand, which grew more intense, as I became more conscious. I could see distinctly the faces that were around me. I spoke.—The first word thrilled Henriette with joy; that gushing of earnest gratitude, that flowed from her pure heart to the good God whom she supplicated; the extatic joy of being the object of that gratitude; the object of those angel prayers was more than recompense for all that I had suffered. Little sacrifice would it be to lay down one's life at such a celestial shrine. I recovered rapidly, though still weak from loss of blood. I had my wounds dressed, and insisted on being told how matters had assumed this favorable turn.

"The story is soon told," said Davison, my nurse, "Jack (thank God for one good thing whisky did), "getting drunk, neglected to give me my medicine, or rather my poison, by which I was kept insensible. I recovered my consciousness. Jack lay on the floor stupefied with liquor, muttering disconnected words, and parts of sentences, as a drunken man is apt to do."

"Must ke-keep feller s-s-leep t' night. L-L-Landor 'll fix 't t' night. D-d—d tedious d-dosin this feller. N-n-nice gal! d—d fancy! S-s-she 's a g-g-go-ner t' night; wish I 's in Landor's b-boots—(hic)—t' night!"

The fearful truth burst on my mind, that I had been a victim to a plot for the destruction of my fair charge; some inspiration seemed to tell me that she was in danger, commanding me to hasten to her rescue. I sprang from the bed; my head dizzy and reeling from the effects of the stupefying draughts; I imagined I could see Henriette contending in the arms of her destroyer, and imploring me for assistance. I dressed myself as quickly as possible, and came to the tavern where you put up, through mud, and rain, and darkness; but a light gleamed before me, brighter than the star that leads the mariner to his wished-for haven,—the hope of saving an innocent being from destruction. I was met at the tavern door by a man who appeared to be in great agitation and trouble.

"Oh, I thought you were my companion," he exclaimed. "A friend came with me here; he went out in the early part of the evening, and has not returned. I fear something has happened him. I have been trying to get the landlord to go with me in search of him; but he will not listen to me, nor even furnish me with a lantern. Are you acquainted in this place?"

"Yes."

"Will you assist me to find my companion?"

"With all my heart," I replied: "but I am also in search of one more dear to me than any other being can be. I must find her first."

"It is singular," continued he, "that we should happen to meet at such a time, in such an out-of-the-way place, and on such similar business. May I ask your name?"

"Robert Davison."

"My God! you are sent here by Heaven; where is is my daughter, Henriette? Oh, where is my child!"

"Mr. Brandon! is it possible!" grasping his hand, hardly daring to believe my too active imagination.

"I am her father," he continued, almost wild with excitement; "where is she! Oh! let me know quickly, is she safe?" And he so overwhelmed me with questions, that I could not speak."

"I am in search of her!"

"Oh, God! she is lost; she is lost! Tell me all, oh, quickly, I can not endure this torturing suspense."

I then related to him what had happened from the time you left me in charge of the ladies. That I was certain their coming here was all a plot,—skillfully laid and carried out,—to effect the ruin of his daughter;—that when Matilda saw how she had been so wickedly deceived,—De Long not being her father,—which she found out two nights after you left, in a conversation that passed between the man and his wife, supposing no one heard them; it prostrated her with grief; she became sick, and has been out of her head ever since; though, I think, she has been made worse by the medicine they have given her, through the directions of the medium. A week ago, I took tea at De Long's, and

was taken sick immediately afterward. I was carried to the house of one of the wicked clique, that is committing such horrid crimes, under the garb of Spiritualism; and I am satisfied, that I have been kept there, helpless ever since, by the stupefaction of the drugs that have been given me. This infernal course of poisoning commenced soon after the arrival of a couple of gentlemen whom Henriette appeared to know; but for whom she seemed to have an instinctive horror,—for what reason I could not imagine, at first, but on the same afternoon that I took tea at De Long's, she revealed all to me. Some great dread, however, kept her in abject fear of them. One of them, Landor, seemed to exercise an irresistible fascination or power of some kind over her. She charged me, with all the energy of her nature, to keep secret what had been said: she had put confidence in me because, she said, "I seemed to be all the friend she now had, Matilda being, as it were, deranged and hastening to the grave." Oh! how it grieved and wounded her heart to see that being, who had been a mother to her, raving in wild paroxyms of agony; and she, by the direction of the medium, was denied the privilege of administering at Matilda's bed-side. I had become deeply interested in Henriette. Never before had I seen a being that so wholly captivated my heart,—her image was in my mind continually,—I would have sacrificed every thing, even life, to have served her. When she told me the circumstances that had happened to her and Matilda, a part of which you had previously hinted at, I saw through the whole plot. I was astonished at such cold-blooded villainy. I could hardly believe that such wickedness could assume the human shape. I resolved to bring these fiends to jus-

tice; to have them arrested that very day. Landor came to De Long's just before tea time; I was introduced to him. I noticed a whispering between him and De Long's wife; she had, no doubt, watched the intimate conversation between Henriette and myself, and my countenance, no doubt, betrayed my thoughts. I felt that it did; I could not help it; it was a bitter task to speak respectfully to those heartless wretches who were thus deliberately planning the destruction of a being, compared with them, as the angel of light to the power of darkness. To avoid suspicion, I took tea with them; and I am convinced that some of my food or drink was drugged, for I took sick immediately afterward. Mr. Brandon could hardly wait for me to finish my story,—but was under the intensest excitement;—it seemed as if he were standing on live coals, and that his whole soul was writhing in the fires of torturing suspense.

"Do you know where she is?" he asked, in the greatest anxiety.

"No; I am seeking her; I hope I can find her. I will be going. You had better stay here till I return; you may see what will be too much for a father's endurance."

"I can not stay; I must go; I will know the worst. It can be no worse than this horrid suspense."

We went immediately, I leading the way. Knowing that Mrs. Madden was a medium, and one of the prime movers of this clique, I concluded that if any dark deed was to be committed, she would have a hand in it. Accordingly, I bent my steps, or I will rather say, God directed them thitherward,—for none but an all-seeing Providence could have brought us here so opportunely;—we arrived at the instant to save you from death. I felled your assassin to the floor,—and after a desperate struggle, succeeded,—with the help of Mr.

Brandon,—in tying his hands and feet;—he now lies in the back room, cursing most fearfully, his luck,—his God,—but more particularly his cowardly employers, who fled through the window as soon as they were aware of our presence.

"I can not describe the joyful meeting between Mr. Brandon and his twice-saved daughter; but you can imagine it, and read it in their heaven-lit faces." And, indeed, I could see the tears of joy in their eyes.

"Oh! my daughter, my own dear Henriette," the father exclaimed clasping her in his arms, "how good is God,—this moment is too happy. I can not tell my joy. Let us kneel down and offer up thanks to that merciful God who has answered our prayers, and delivered us from the hands of the destroyer!"

Never did I listen to such an outpouring of the heart's gratitude;—it sprang from the deepest springs of the soul. My heart also sympathetically beat with his, for it seemed that my prayer, as often before when sincerely asked, had been answered; yes! more than answered. The joys of that moment were a foretaste of heaven,—where all of our loved ones are restored to us.

To see the inexpressible delight of the parent and child at that moment. Oh! it was joy extatic!

"But, where is Matilda?" I asked.

"She is at De Long's," Davison answered; "and we must go and get her from that accursed place without delay, for there is no telling what these thwarted villains may do for revenge."

Day was beginning to appear, although the thick fog obscured the light. I got to the tavern by being supported on one side by Mr. Brandon, and on the other by Davison. After seeing me there safely, Davison hurried off on foot (first having well armed himself) to

De Long's. Henriette bound up my wounds with the delicacy of a fairy's touch; it was with much persuasion that I got her to draw the bandages tight enough to keep the edges of the wounds together; so fearful was she of causing pain. In about an hour, she and her father, and a good-natured farmer, started out in a lumber-wagon for De Long's. It was nearly noon before they returned, bringing Matilda with them; she was brought in on a feather bed, utterly prostrated, by long days of cruel disappointment, and grief, and sickness, and made worse by the infernal drugs given her; she seemed but the shadow of her former self. I should not have recognized her. Those full, brilliant eyes now sunken and dull,—those full cheeks displaced by angular bones,—those pearly teeth, covered with a brown crust,—that tongue which charmed the hearer with its graceful mobility and liquid words, now stiff, and dry, and parched,—those arms, that swelled in their voluptuous roundness, now shriveled, their skin hugging the shivering bones. Oh! it was a cruel sight, which I gladly would have avoided. She turned her large eyes on me, and faintly nodded,—her parched lips slowly moving, from which came a husky whisper. Tears, one by one, ran down the deep hollows of her emaciated cheeks; she attempted to extend to me her shriveled hand,—I took it in my own; and, I confess, though it be called weakness, I bathed that hand in tears,—I could not help it;—I would not have helped it if I could. That scene was a melting of hearts,—there was not an unmoistened eye in the room,—not a word was said,—the feeling was too deep for words.

Poor Henriette could not restrain her feelings, but leaving the room, she wept like a child. I saw that the excitement was too much for Matilda, and suggested

her being conveyed to a quiet room, where she could get composed and rested after the severe exertion she had just undergone.

The story had now spread through the little burgh, which numbered some fifty or sixty houses. It only takes two hours and a half for such an item to pervade the innermost recesses of a country town. It is really astonishing how news will fly through such a place. Tell Mr. Dumpkins, at the lower end of town, that farmer Crabb's brindle cow got choked on a turnip;—go into the bar-room of the tavern (all country towns of this size have two taverns),—get a drink of warm water out of a whisky tumbler,—go on your way, and call at the last house in the upper end of town, and the first thing that greets your ears, will be:

"Have you heard about farmer Crabb losing all his stock?"

"No."

"Well he has,—fourteen cows,—with the old muley, twenty-one calves, and two and a half yoke of cattle,—all choked to death on turnips;—isn't it awful?"

Let a new and strange family move into a town of about this size,—stay at home,—keep the doors shut,—attend to their own business,—speak when they are spoken to; and you can not imagine, how soon every man, woman and child in said town will know every item, great, small, and indifferent, in reference to the history of said family. If they wish to have a more minute history of themselves, than they themselves can give, let them go about the third day after their arrival and inquire of almost any one they meet, and they will be astonished at what they hear.

It is as impossible to confine an item of news, in a small country town, as it is to make a pet possum lie still in a

corner. It will ambulate, and perambulate, until it has nosed every old woman, spinster, miss, and masculine within tongue reach. They will rise early, and go out with a quilt over their shoulders,—to tell their neighbor over the fence, before he gets out of bed, that they saw light in the new-comers' house, "till way past midnight."

"Yeau don't say!" the neighbor over the fence exclaims; his eyes perfectly open to the wonderful fact.

"Dew tell!" neighbor over the fence's wife, now chimes in, awake to the momentous crisis, poking a dirty nightcap, with a very wide, flabby ruffle out of the window,—which nightcap covers something resembling a distaff of damaged tow.

"Dew tell; I know'd thar was sumthin' wrong abeaut them ar new comers; they're so offish, an' stuck-up. I'll be beaund thar's sumthin' wrong. I'll inquire of Mrs. Lingual, when I go down after a bucket of water, what she feaund out. I'll bet she knows 'em like a book, by this time."

"Oh, Mis. Labial! I like to forgot it! my old man was tellin' me after he come home from the grocery, last night."

"Oh! I'm so sorry Labial has to be away so much," interposed said Labial's talking half. "I don't hear anythin' more what's goin' on till everybody else knows it.

"What I was goin' to say,—why, last night, at the Dutch grocery, that Jack, as they call 'im,—what come with them stuck-up-folks, who's been tendin' on the sick schoolmaster,—that Jack come in an' got a bottle of liquor an' drinked enough to git pretty blue, an' what d'ye think he let eaut? why he said somethin' abeaut somebody's bein' pizened. I tell yeau, Mrs. Labial, thar's somethin' sing'lar abeaut them ar new comers."

Mrs. Labial couldn't stand it any longer. Off she bounces; jumps into her shilling calico,—can not even take time to put on petticoat or stockings,—forgets to take off the "yaller handkerchief;"—the old "stone"-pipe with the cane stem, must lie on the mantlepiece until weightier affairs are disposed of;—she draws what geometricians would call a straight line,—the shortest distance between two points,—said points being Labial's back-door, and the town pump. She marks off this line into regular sections as with a pair of compasses,—the length of each section being the extreme expansion of the legs of Mrs. Labial. Each division was marked with a very distinct footprint in the new-made mud, the toes making a deeper and somewhat twisted impression, indicating that the steps were taken with no little progressive velocity.

Long before she arrived it the pump, she sees, alas! that she has been one of the "foolish virgins" (excuse the quotation); that others are there before her; in fact, there has been a quorum of Mrs. Linguals at the town pump, for half an hour. "Did you evers," and "I wonders," and the clitter-clatters of half a dozen women's tongues were in full blast.

There are two "On 'Changes" in all little towns, where the mighty affairs of the burgh are canvassed;—stock in chickens and Berkshires are bought and sold, and characters quoted. One of these "On 'Changes" is the Post-office; the other the town pump. The Post-office is the "On 'Change" of the male financiers, and the town pump of the feminine operators.

The bulletin of the latest intelligence is not only hung out for gratuitous perusal, but the news is cried aloud, so that neither the deaf, blind nor fool may remain "unposted." In half an hour after Mrs. Labial arrived,

breathless, at the pump, the wonderful revelations of Jack had assumed a definite, tangible shape in every astonished burgher's imagination. There was no doubt about it,—half the township had been poisoned, and was now writhing in agony. It was well that this mild dose of the horrible was given to the burghers first; it somewhat prepared them for the awful shock which was to succeed.

Imagine then, what a commotion there was in town, about eight o'clock, when the full details of the tragedy broke forth on the astonished place; every individual, from two years old and upward, seemed to receive the shock at one and the same time; what an opening of eyes; what a falling of chins; what a relaxation and elongation of visages, generally; what an avalanche of "oh, dears," and "my Gods!" Never had such a tragedy been enacted in that quiet little burgh.

After the wonderment and horror had subsided a very little (it takes days and weeks for it to go entirely down in a burgh of this size), the well-grounded indignation of the citizens began to assume a practical shape. Even Judge Lynch was talked of.

When a poor devil, being a stranger, commits a misdemeanor in one of these out-of-the-way places, he stands a poor chance; no sympathy is shown him. Nothing but the most rigorous punishment is thought of; he had no business to be a stranger. The fact is indisputable, that a stranger is dealt harder with, for the same crime, than a citizen. I have seen men brutally stoned and half drowned, for misdemeanors which would hardly have been noticed, if the unfortunate criminal had been a resident. The indignation of the community, therefore, having a safe and free vent on the heads of the friendless strangers, knew

no legitimate bounds, but fairly boiled over; and the boiling over was like the boiling over of a varnish kettle; it did not quench, but greatly increased the fury of the flames.

The searches for Landor, Jack and the preacher were fruitless. De Long, also, was among the missing. It was generally believed that they had taken time and the night-train by the forelock (the night-train by the cow-catcher, probably). It was well they did so, for I would not have pledged myself to have put their limbs together again, if they had fallen into the hands of the burghers at that time.

The red-man, Lu, and the balance of the Spiritualists, being citizens, received more lenity; after due consideration of the higher powers,—a self constituted council of the "knowing ones" in a small village, including the postmaster, the doctor, the storekeeper, the sawmill-man, and such like dignitaries,—it was concluded to give Lu a trial, and to let the ringleaders of the shadowy society have a chance to "slope," as they called it. This privilege of being permitted to "slope," contained an important proviso, to wit: that said slopers in prospective should "hustle their boots."

CHAPTER XXII.

The Red-man, Lu, brought to Trial. A corn-crib Court-house. The Country "'Squire;" his Library and "Court fixins." Pettifoggers. Law in the Country. The Pettifogging Doctor. The County Seat Attorney, Mr. McLaughlin, Esq. Country Lawyers. Symptoms of being Whiskyized. A Lawyer's Fee. "Fixes it up." The Elephant of Law made to perform astonishing evolutions. Legal Lore. Wonderful "Precedents." The "'Squire" is able to defend one side of the case. Mr. Blower insists on being advocate for the State. Mr. McLaughlin, Esq.'s Speech. Hits the "'Squire" and his Wife between "Wind and Water." The Verdict. Singular manner of disposing of Criminals in the North-west. The Attorney looks out for the "main chance." Return to Cincinnati. A happy Company depart for home. Waiting for a Letter.

AFTER dinner, Lu was brought into Court, that is, into one crib of a double log-house; certainly the first house ever built in the burgh. The ground logs of the structure were completely dissolved into their original elements. The chinking had fallen out, from time to time, and given place to old newspapers and old letters, petticoats, old shirts, and hats, and coffee sacks, and every other imaginable filling, until I verily believe that a remnant of any article in the dry-goods line could have been drawn from the crevices of the Hall of Justice. Between the two cribs was a passage-way or hall, filled with old barrels of corn-cobs, old harness, a rusty delegation from every set of mechanical tools. Over the hall was a mow of broom-corn, which threw a doubt in the visitor's mind, whether he was entering a human or equine establishment. The two cribs having settled, from their greater weight, drew the roof into

a regular hill; the summit of which was over the aforesaid broom-corn. To give an idea of the mechanism of the roof, I will state that it was undoubtedly the first and only roof that was ever put on the house. It had been patched, from time to time, as shingle after shingle wore out, with new shingles of different lengths, and pieces of half-inch and inch-and-a-half boards, varying in length from one to twelve feet; until the canopy of the twin cribs resembled a shanghai's back, in moulting time.

From the gable-end of one crib rose a huge brick chimney, whose upper courses of bricks had been seriously encroached on, at various times, to mend the worn out, rat-mined hearth below. From the gable-end of the other crib rose a hole (if a hole can rise), which had been a very good place in its day, to put a chimney through. Entering the crib, that boasted of the chimney, we were ushered into—"*Court.*" On each side of the door was a bed, filling up a corner of the room; two trundle-fixings, and several *other things*, in complete *dishabille*, peeped bashfully from under the beds. An old man, with his face to the wall, sat writing at a desk, which was filled with all sorts of smoky chattels,—documentary, literary and mechanical,—such as deeds, summonses "to appear," dirty night-caps, "Lady's Books," minus the covers, illustrations and half the reading; papers of pumpkin seeds; and a prong or two of silversmith's pinchers; remnants of worn-out sandpaper; a brass watch, and the running gear of a Dutch clock. On the lid of the desk lay the Ohio Statutes, and a copy of "Swan." The old man, writing at the desk,—who was the 'Squire, beyond the possibility of a doubt,—would have appeared to be about fifty, if he had been close shaved, and his wig had extended

half an inch lower; but as it was, his gray beard and a band of silver bordering the sorrel-colored wig, set him, at least, fifteen years a-head; he wore a pair of spectacles, minus the half of one eye, and the whole of one limb,—which limb was supplied by a piece of tape, that looked very much like tapes sometimes used for going around limbs. He wrote nervously, on different pieces of paper, apparently with no purpose but to occupy his mind, and pretended to be doing something. The room was crowded to its utmost capacity. There was a perfect Babel of tongues,—each individual tongue a self-constituted attorney, to argue this or that side of the case. There were female attorneys as well as male,—all the Mrs. Linguals, and Mrs. Labials, and Mrs. Eternal Gabblers, were there. No wonder the poor 'Squire was afraid to stop writing, and look up. I really pitied him.—To hear the legal opinions, then and there expressed on common and uncommon law,—one would have thought that Blackstone never need have written nor Chitty plead,—such an oppressive legal atmosphere is not to be breathed in our higher Courts. If one wants to know what law is, let him have a case before some 'Squire Cranberry of some Cranberry town, and he will see all the minutiæ of this intricate machine. He can there learn the difference between a dotted and an undotted *i*—between Tweedle-dum and Tweedle-dee;—these nice distinctions are not to be seen in the larger courts; you must look at the animal through the microscope of a Country 'Squire's office to see his wonderful proportions. We had plenty of legal advisers,—a one-horse doctor, who supposed he had learned all there was to learn in medical science, and having no hope of farther conquests in that field, from sheer lack of things to be conquered,—sighing,

Alexander-like, for more Indias,—had marched over and entered the legal territory,—hoping there to display his wonderful powers of generalship. As to weapons and resources, he had the all-powerful sword of gab, which he wielded easily *a-la-mode* rig-ma-role, and the Statutes and "Swan," of the justice, belonged *ex officio* to him as well as to every other individual of the township; but his greatest legal resource was his real or imaginary "intuition," which enabled him to unravel the knottiest of knots, on first principles, or the principles of "common law," to the perfect satisfaction of the "'Squire" aforesaid. This intellectual prodigy seldom had occasion to use the legal works above-mentioned, except (by the aid of the index, which was a vexatious enigma to him) to hunt up some passage as a text, about as applicable to the case as certain scriptural texts I have heard before now, were to the sermons that followed; then he would close the books and expand on the text *ad infinitum*,—drawing on his "intuition" to fill up the argument. It was really astonishing, not to say, wonderful, what an amount of argument and opinion he manufactured from such a small capital;—and he appeared to be listened to by the open mouths and fish eyes of his admirers, with no little interest;—indeed, he appeared to be the whale of this pond. He was very liberal with his opinions, throwing them round broadcast without restriction or compensation,—very unlike the generality of attorneys, whose mouths are Hobbs' locks, to be opened but by one key,—the dollar-combination-key.

This remarkable liberality with his opinions, might have been accounted for, from the fact of his not long having been engaged in legal enterprises, and had not as yet, learned the "open sesame" of the trade; or else

that he was lavishing his intellectual stores on the "bait" principle, hoping thereby to catch, not a gudgeon, but a case.

So far as we were concerned, we thought that the case in hand was so plain, as to be capable of explaining itself; without the valuable assistance of the "intuitive" barrister.

The prisoner however had sent to the county seat for a regular lawyer to defend his cause; and our desultory thoughts were arrested by the abrupt entrance of this distinguished personage.

That he was the "county seat attorney" was evident, from the whisperings of "here comes the lawyer," but more unquestionably, by the peculiar swagger of self importance, that a "county seat lawyer" can only assume in an out-of-the-way justice's court. He feels in such a situation, that he is "some pumpkins;"—that he is the man to be said to; "How d'ye do, 'Squire Pumpkins;"—that he is the man that can walk through the room and take a chair by the justice;—that he is the man that can look wise and notice anybody or not,—just as he pleases,—and can hold the first two fingers of his left hand for merchant Merrimac to shake.

He would have the gaping burghers think it was a great condescension for him to leave the superior realms of the county seat, and exalt, by his presence, their comparative insignificance. Such small-fry cases before a justice, he wishes it distinctly understood, are "no object to him;" he consents to undergo this long pilgrimage from the center of the world (the county seat) through courtesy to his "fellow citizens,"—on the principle that a doctor will sometimes take a long ride, for the especial accommodation of a patient. The lawyer, as in the present instance, is "overrun and

completely pressed down," with important cases at home, involving thousands and hundreds of thousands of dollars,—still his duty to his "fellow citizens," renders it obligatory on him to leave these huge legal undertakings and ride ten or a dozen miles for the paltry sum of five dollars. Some have been small-souled enough to insinuate that this wonderful self-denial and sacrifice, on the part of the county seat champions of justice, arises from a desire to display the virtuous beauties of their immaculate characters, and the wonderful powers of their forensic eloquence, thereby pointing them out as the "peoples' choice," at the fall election, and the lawyers to be employed in the pig and bull cases of the township. And furthermore, these insignificant cases before justices are not, unfrequently, the seeds of important cases,—the acorns from which grow the mighty oak lawsuits,—spreading out their huge limbs in the lofty regions of Common Pleas, Chancery and Supreme Courts, and sending their ten thousand greedy roots into the deepest strata of the clients' property.

The legitimate "choice of the people," in the present instance, was a middle-sized and middle-aged man of rather spare and rough features and tanned complexion, indicating a philosophic observance of the laws of health in being much in the open air; which precaution men of such intellectual abilities are too apt to disregard.

Truthfulness obliges me to say, that there was a decided floridity about the anterior portion of the nose, which might have been the index of healthful plethora in a salubrious climate, or of a naturally florid complexion; but the biliousness of the climate in North-western Ohio, associated, as in the present instance, with a decidedly bilious temperament, would effectually preclude such an explanation. And then there was a tardy

movement of the upper eyelids, strongly inclining downward; and then, as he rubbed past us, singular ideas of burnt sugar and spoiled corn flitted through our minds; and then he was ushered in Court by a broad-faced, thick-lipped, serpent-eyed Germanian dealer in concentrated articles generally; and then, when he walked up to "the bench," with his stove-up hat, and said "How ar'ye, 'Square,'"—he presented his whole right hand at the disposal of said "'Squire."—"How do you do, Mr. McLaughlin?" the "'Squire," replied in his blandest style, which was a peculiar one, having a semi-pause, or rather drawling before the pronunciation of each important word,—as though he were weighing its import in every possible bearing,—before suffering it to go forth. The "'Squire" had a peculiarity of emphasizing these important words by raising up on his toes, and then coming down suddenly on his heels,—a decided improvement, if not an actual discovery in rhetoric,—enabling the speaker to use not only his tongue and hands, but his heels in oratory. As in the foregoing interrogatory of "How do you do, Mr. McLaughlin," the heels coming down on "Laugh" fairly drove the impression home.

Mr. McLaughlin, having shaken the "'Squire's" hand with great fervor, and given him a very affectionate and patronizing look, and inquired after Mrs. "'Square," and all the little "'squares," and "'squaresses," (Mr. Mc Laughlin knew that it would not set his case back any to get on the right side of the "'Squire's" wife).

The lawyer, having poured the yeast into his batch of dough, and put it to rise under the warming influences of the "'Squire" and his wife's domestic affections, set himself about seeing what was to be done. He was permitted to take Lu (for that was the name

the culprit went by) into the passage way, in company with the constable. Standing near the door, I could not help hearing the conversation that passed between them.

"Well, Lu, I have left a very important case at the county seat, to come up here for you. How is it about the pay?—How much money have you got?"

"None," Lu answered. "Them cursed Spiritualists from Cincinnati have run off without paying me a cent,—and in the worst kind of a fix."

'Well, what property have you got?"

"All that I've got is the half of a crib of corn,—but that is all my family has to live on this summer, and I have a cow, and a few tools that I work with. I wish you'd 'tend to my case and get me off, and I'll go right to work and earn the money to pay you."

"I guess I'd better take the other side of the case," said the lawyer, taking out a paper of "Bronson's fine cut," and stuffing half of it in his mouth, and looking around in a manner intended to be perfectly careless,—as much as to say,—Mr. Lu, I guess you'd better get another lawyer (having no intention however of losing his client, for he would have talked all day for nothing, rather than have missed the opportunity of proving to the burghers who was the right candidate for "prosecuting attorney," and who was the lawyer "what could put the pig and bull cases through.)"

"Well, how much of my property do you want, to get me clear? Don't take more than you can help; for if I go to jail, my wife and children will need what little we have."

"Why, I tell you, Lu, I have lost a case worth twice as much as all your property, coming up here; and beside, I can plead the other side of the case, and get my

money down; so you see that the corn, and cow, and tools, wouldn't begin to make up my loss."

"You won't take it all, will you," said Lu, with a trembling voice (though a hardened villain, he loved his family).

"No; I won't take any of it," said the lawyer, with a very good imitation of offended dignity. "I'll plead the other side of the case;" and he was turning on his heel, casting an anxious look at Lu, which said, "speak quick; I 'm going."

Lu did speak, and told the lawyer he would give him all he had, if he would get him clear.

"I'll do the best I can for you," Mr. McLaughlin condescended to reply; "but you must give me a bill of sale for all these things, before I commence."

"It seems as if you was very hard on me," said Lu.

"Will you do it or not? I 'm in a hurry; for I want to get on the other side of this case, if you don't want me; and if I do go against you, Lu, your 're bound to go to Columbus; for I never lost a case yet, except the 'great pig case,' and that was the fault of the c——d witnesses. Shall we fix it up?"

"Yes."

The lawyer borrowed the "'Square's" writing apparatus (which was a very primitive one, consisting of a turkey-quill pen, and the case of an old brass watch half full of ink), and with the constable and Lu, went into the other crib to "fix it up."

It would occupy too much space to give a detailed account of this unique trial; although it would be a great legal curiosity. I had seen the law elephant, in almost every possible situation, but I must confess that I had here an entirely new and original view of the animal. We never before knew of its wonderful sagacity, as

illustrated by its keeper, the learned Mr. McLaughlin, Esq. He made it go through evolutions that perfectly astonished the beholder. He led it up to a hole which the "'Squire," after an examination through the open ring of his spectacles, decided was altogether too small to give passage to the elephant's body; but after a few manipulations and explantions of the operator,—"pop" went the elephant through it, to the perfect satisfaction of the "Bench" (a three legged chair with half a back, in this case). It would be interesting to give the "'Squire's" dignified speeches and decisions on points of order, and some of the witnesses' testimony as to Lu's immaculate character, and the suggestions thrown in occasionally by the "'Squire's" wife, and some of the highfalutin words which the wonderful attorney got out; and to examine the long list of cases that he referred the "May it please the Court" to. The absence of books to substantiate the correctness of these references, obliged the aforesaid "May it please the Court" to take the attorney's word for it. Some of the cases he quoted were very strange, almost incredible, in fact. And some of the books and authors he referred to, are not to be found in the most extensive catalogues of law books,—showing most conclusively to all there assembled, that the attorney was an attorney of no ordinary attainments. One case cited we never had seen reported in a law book, but had often read it in the Old Testament. Another case of "Macbeth *versus* Duncan," was very interesting to us, on account of our never having known that their case was carried up to Court. It was quite interesting, also, to see the efforts of the medico-legal gentleman to have something to say in the matter; he insisted on assisting the prosecution, inasmuch as the prisoner had counsel; it was un-Democratic, un-American, un-just, that the

poor State should stand here without an advocate. The "'Squire" decided, however, that feeling pretty strong from having had mutton for breakfast, he was fully able to "sit on the Bench," and pettifog for the State to boot. The doctor not being able to illuminate the Court with his "intuition," wasted its effulgence in flickering rays among the Dicks and Toms, and Mrs. Labials, in the back part of the room; being careful, however, to shape his arguments to the views of the 'Squire's wife, who stood there an inexorable, and by no means mute censor of the entire Court. Another heroic-looking fellow,—a regular blower,—dressed *a-la-mode* country merchant,—but whose big hands and awkward motions bespoke him a cord-wood cutter, or a sawmill-man,—was determined to have a hand in the fight; he actually took off his coat and rolled up his sleeves for a regular letting off of gas; for I was told, he was a regular laboratory; being able, without wooding or watering, to eliminate gas, for full six hours at a stretch,—indeed, he considered "gas-ing" (as he styled it himself), to be the natural function of the vocal apparatus. The "'Squire" referred to us, "whether we thought (a drawl before "we," and a tap of the heels on "thought") the county should be put to the expense of such an amount of aeriform assistance? We thought it should not,—being a new county,"—and not having finished its court-house and jail. At this, the laboratory up with its coat and left the room in high dudgeon, saying, that we were all "d—d fools," and we must make our calculations to get along without him, after that.

But I must pass the numerous serio-ludicrous incidents that occurred during the trial, and hasten on to its conclusion. If some friendly premonition had advised

us of the great oratorical phenomenon we were about to witness, in the shape of the attorney's closing speech, we should have considered it our duty to logic, style, gesture and eloquence, generally, to have taken a phono and gestu-graphic duplicate of this wonderful effort. To say that it was logical, would convey a faint idea of its clenched and riveted arguments, which were fairly drilled and leaded into the "'Squire's" head. That it was entirely legal and "according to Blackstone," and "Gunter," there was no doubt, for each proposition was sealed and stamped with its Latin label, or at least with a dubbing that the 'Squire was to take for Latin: there was the *cut-throat-a-bus manorum*, the *ex-come-at-um pluribum*, and the *corpus grab-um any-where-um*. It was really refreshing to see the 'Squire's wife open her eyes and mouth with wonder, as these thunderbolts of law came crashing forth from the attorney's resonant mouth. His vindictive against "the cruel persecutors" of his client, was legitimately defiant and martial. But all this was as nothing, when compared with the final closing up, or the pathetic part; when he appealed to "the feelings," as he styled it.

Lu's Betsy, and her little ones, were supposed to come up before the "May it please the Court," in exceedingly well ventilated attire, and with no superfluous flesh (which really were a possible case, after being deprived of their corn and cow), and then the "'Squire's" wife, and her little basket of "'Squire's" chips were supposed to be placed in precisely the same interesting situation; and here the Demosthenes, No. 2, pulled out a silk handkerchief, which once was red, and wiped his eyelids. This was a dead shot; this took the Squire and his wife, between wind and water; she boo-hooed right

out; and I verily believe that if the tender-hearted attorney could have had a horn of burnt sugar and "baldface," just at that time, he would not have stopped till he had made every lachrymal gland in the room to flow like an eave-spout. Every thing earthly has an end; the attorney's speech was not an exception; it, and daylight, ended at about the same time.

The "'Squire" thought he would be able, if nothing happened, to come to a decision in about a week; but the "constituency" there assembled, insisted on an immediate decision, as the County should not be put to the expense of keeping the prisoner so long. The "'Squire" took the Statutes, Swan, his wife and the attorney, and retired to the other crib. They soon returned, and I noticed the attorney whispering in the ear of the constable, and of the principal Mrs. Labials and Mr. Somebodys of the place. I overheard him telling Mr. Waxed-end, who was rather hard of hearing, that, to save the county expense, they had concluded to let Lu "slope." The constable was to take him home to get his clothes, preparatory to being taken to jail, and when he had got his clothes, the constable was to be taken with a sudden fit of chronic rheumatism, and Lu was to "slope" as aforesaid.

After the "'Squire" had written down in the docket, that the prisoner should be bound over to Court, the sloping operation,—which seemed satisfactory to all parties,—and especially to the attorney, who was already "dickering" with another client, who owed him, to shell Lu's corn, and bring it, and the cow, and tools, down to him. The "sloping" was performed before the eyes of the assembled burghers, including the "'Squire" and his wife.

As Lu went over the hill, he did not seem to be in

any particular hurry, as though he had no fears of being followed. We did not feel disposed to interfere with this singular way of disposing of criminals. We had found what we so anxiously sought; we felt satisfied and were too happy to desire revenge; we were all too glad to get away from this scene of so much trouble.

The next morning's train took us on our homeward course,—Matilda riding very comfortably on a bed supported on two seats.

We went no further than Bellefontaine that day, and the next day we arrived in Cincinnati. Matilda stood the jaunt much better than we expected; being freed from the poisonous drugs, and being borne up by the kindness, and never-tiring attentions of Henriette, her appetite grew better, and her strength actually increased by the exertion of traveling. The company staid in the city about two weeks, for Matilda to get fully recovered. I forgot to mention, that the schoolmaster accompanied us. Mr. Brandon insisted on this arrangement, saying, he was greatly in need of just such an enterprising and trustworthy man to take charge of his plantation; he had been long seeking for a competent man, in whom he could put implicit confidence to fill this situation. He felt assured that he had at last found him in Robert Davison. This might have been the only reason for Mr. Brandon's insisting so strenuously on the schoolmaster's accompanying them; but I surmised that Henriette's wishes had something to do with it. At all events the schoolmaster went with us, and a most valuable addition he was to our company. Every day he grew in Mr. Brandon's favor, who said to me one day,—"I don't see how I have done without Robert as long as I have. It seems that I could not get along without him; he has become as dear to me as if he were a son."

Matilda having disposed of her furniture, and having sufficiently recovered to proceed on the journey, I took a final leave of her, and the others. I will not describe the parting; it was painful,—but not without its joy. Mr. Brandon and his daughter, filled with gratitude, insisted on my paying them a visit at no distant day. It was with much argument that I prevented the thankful father from forcing on me a munificent sum. I considered that I had done no more than my duty,—no more than I would expect any man to do, without expectation of recompense. They all promised to write to me as soon as they arrived home. In about ten days I began to look for a letter; but twice ten days passed and none came.

A majority of people are careless about writing where business does not compel them to. How often do we promise, on parting with friends, to write to them immediately; and how often do we neglect to do so! Having experienced similar disappointments before, I concluded that domestic pleasures and duties had so absorbed my friends' attention that they had neglected to write.

I never learned who sent me the telegraphic dispatch from ——, urging me to come there immediately. I surmised it was some conscience-stricken Spiritualist, who was afraid to acknowledge the act.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A large Letter. A most interesting and exciting Narrative from the Schoolmaster. A trip down the Mississippi. Mysterious Passengers. Matilda and Henriette missing. Mr. Brandon and Davison return to ——. Waiting for a Steamboat. The Father stricken down with despair. Fruitless Search. A Clue. The Little Boy's story. Pursuit. A Mississippi Homestead. Negro "Frolic and Breakdown." Phil lets it out; His "dicker" with the strange men. The "Handsum Wimen." Important Discovery. A Night ride through the Woods. Phil's Cabin in the wood. "Just in Time." An Exciting Scene. Henriette Saved. Sam's Cabin. Important Arrest. A Happy Liberation. A couple of "bad-scared" Negroes. Air Castles demolished. "Massa Jennins." "Perfectly astonished." Going to Court. Bonnd-Over. A Mississippi Lawyer. Landor's Letter to his Wife. Falleau's Letter to Miss Callan. Return to ——. A happy Reunion.

In just one month from the departure of my friends from Cincinnati, I received a letter, or rather a package post-marked ——. On opening it I found it contained twelve closely-written sheets, which read as follows:

"My very Dear ——.

I hasten to tell you why I have not written sooner, and to give you an account of what has happened to us, since we left Cincinnati. I thought, when parting from you, that our troubles were over, but they were not. The Scripture says, 'whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth.' May it be so with us,—and may He bring us safely through all our troubles,—that we may enjoy the domestic quietness of a peaceful home.

Nothing happened us, worthy of note, for the first two days of our travel. Matilda gained strength rapidly, so that she took a short walk on shore, at every landing where our stop was long enough to admit of it.

She expressed a desire, when we should arrive at —— to go and see Mr. ——, the foreman of the coroner's jury, of whom you told her. She wished to make arrangements to have a set of tombstones put to the grave of Emily Lee.

Mr. Brandon and myself had taken a stateroom, as likewise Matilda and Henriette had done. All the staterooms in the ladies' cabin having been taken up, they had to take one in the main cabin.

Matilda remarked to me, the next morning after we started, that the occupants of the room next to theirs, being three men, kept themselves constantly secluded during the day,—not even going out to their meals; but that after dark, they went out closely muffled up in cloaks. She imagined she heard them frequently whispering to one another, and noticed that, whenever she and Henriette were conversing, they kept perfectly still. Nothing farther was thought of the matter. We arrived at —— just at dusk. Mr. Brandon and myself had not slept much, the night before, being disturbed by the noise of the boat, to which we were both unaccustomed.

Having laid down soon after tea, we both fell asleep, and were not aware of arriving at ——.

When I awoke, the steamer was still under-way, and the lamps were lit in the cabin. Mr. Brandon was still sleeping;—it was nine o'clock. On asking how long before we should arrive at —— the clerk told me we left that place two hours ago. I immediately went into the ladies' cabin to make apology to Matilda for not seeing her at ——, as I knew she wished to go on shore.

She was not there. Not seeing either of the ladies before the ladies' cabin was closed, I concluded they had retired for the night, and went to bed myself.

When the breakfast bell rang, next morning, Matilda and Henriette did not appear.

The chambermaid went to their room; they were not there. We became alarmed. The whole boat was quickly searched; but they were found nowhere on board. The mate said, 'that two ladies, bearing their description, went ashore at —— asking him how long the boat would remain.' None of the deck-hands saw them return. We were forced to believe that they had been left.

Our anxiety was intense. We were put off, with our baggage, at the next landing. Here we waited impatiently, from hour to hour, with eyes continually strained southward, and ears anxiously listening for the dull puff of an upward-bound steamer.

Time goes wearily, when one is waiting at a Mississippi river landing for a steamboat, when he is on ordinary business; imagine then, how painfully the time dragged with us.

Mr. Brandon became almost crazy with ineffectual watching. Finally, after mid-day we heard the distant puffing of a steamer, which was so far off as to sound like some inveterate snorer; but alas! for our hopes! the steamer was coming down.

We are apt to say, under such circumstances, that every thing is sure to be going the wrong way. But we had a hope that the ladies might be on this boat, being the next one after us. We hastened on board, when she landed, but found them not. It was not long till our eyes were gladdened by the sight of a boat coming up, which took us aboard and landed us, the next day, at ——. Weary and broken down with anxiety and watching (for need I tell you that sleep had fled our

eyes, and appetite our taste?) We hastened to the coroner.

He said that Matilda and Henriette were there two evenings before, and after remaining about ten minutes, departed for the boat. In vain did we search for them. No one in the whole city had seen them. Finally, when almost ready to sink into despair, not knowing what to think of their mysterious disappearance, a little boy about eight years old, hearing us inquiring for the ladies, said, he saw two men, the evening before, get out of a close-covered carriage and throw their cloaks around a couple of women as they were walking along an unfrequented part of a street, leading to the river, and carry them into the carriage. The driver immediately whipped his horses and drove off toward the back part of the town, as fast as the horses could go.

The thought flashed in my mind,—is it possible that we have been followed by these fiends, from whom we so narrowly escaped! Can there be any connection between this singular disappearance, and the mysterious occupants of the stateroom, who never showed themselves till after night!

Under such circumstances, the mind is apt to give birth to the most fantastic creations,—although there seemed nothing in this supposition impossible, nor what we might not expect from the desperate character of those who were seeking to destroy our peace.

I did not communicate my surmise to Mr. Brandon; for he had as much trouble now as he could endure; he seemed perfectly paralyzed with grief, and incapable of thought or action. When I asked him what we should do, he answered:

"I don't know. Do as you think best."

I got some hand-bills struck off, offering a reward for

their recovery, and immediately started a man out on each road leading from the city, to post them up, and learn what they could. In they meantime, to confirm my suspicions, I had found out where three men had hired a barouche, on the evening of the disappearance of the ladies. They hired it for three days; and the livery man seemed quite anxious about the safety of his property, after hearing the little boy's story.

Being strangers, one of the men had proposed leaving a valuable gold watch, in security for the barouche, which led the owner to suppose he needed no security.

The men were muffled up so that no description of their persons could be given. I occupied myself, during the day, in inquiring of almost every person I met, and especially of those coming from the country. Several persons, living at different distances, on a certain road, said that they were awakened in the night by their dogs barking at a carriage going along the road very rapidly, on the night of our landing.

I waited in the most painful suspense, about thirty-six hours,—all the men I had sent out had returned but one. I then set out on horseback, in company with two officers and the livery man,—all of us well armed.

We left the disconsolate father in town, in case some news of the missing ones might come there. We took the road on which I had heard of the carriage passing, and the one which the man had taken who had not returned. These circumstances gave us hope that he was on track of them. We had traveled about thirty miles, when a carriage came in sight; instantly our companion recognized it as his. My heart scarcely beat till we met it. The driver was a stranger to me,—as also to the others. No one was inside the carriage. The driver told us he was hired by a man who met him

on the road, about forty miles back in the country, to bring the carriage to ——. On being told it belonged to one of our party, he said the man had given him money to pay for the use of it. The driver's description of the man corresponded exactly with that of De Long's. I felt myself almost confirmed in my suspicions. We were satisfied, from the driver's manner, that he was in no way connected with the men's business, other than taking the barouche back. The man told him to tell the owner of the barouche that he had found his business such as to prevent him returning to —— by the time specified. We told the driver our business, and he gladly volunteered to assist us. The livery man returned with his carriage, and the stranger went on with us,—having brought a horse to ride back. He said, about ten miles from his home, he met a man on horseback who inquired, very minutely, as to how he came by the carriage; so minutely, indeed, that he began to fear it had been stolen, and that he might get into difficulty. The man that he met, we concluded, was the man I had sent out, who had not returned. We hastened on, therefore, full of hope. We traveled till we arrived at the home of our guide, which was after midnight. The moon shone brightly, and if our minds had been at ease, it would have been a not unpleasant ride, though we got rather tired and hungry toward the last. He lived about half a mile from the road, in a hewn log-house, which was considered a very good house, no doubt, when it was first built. It was what is called a double log-house, having a passage way between the two large square rooms. One of the rooms was used for a kitchen and eating-room, and the other for a sleeping and sitting-room; the passage way answered as a porch, and was used, in hot weather, for a

dining-hall. The house was much dilapidated and out of repair, as also appeared to be the stable and the fences; the orchard, which we passed through, never had been trimmed, and many of the trees were dying from old age. It appeared as though the first owner of the place had been very industrious and tidy,—a thrifty farmer,—but that his successors (the present one being the second,—a grandson) had taken no pains to keep the premises in order, but had let it grow up to briars and brush; and had worn out the soil with successive crops of the most exhausting kind. Our guest's servants were having a high time of it. (Jennings was a bachelor; hence when he was gone from home, the old proverb was verified,—"When the cat's away, the mice will play)." It being a beautiful night, and not expecting their master home for two or three days, they had invited the servants of the neighboring plantations to have, what intellectual society would have called "a happy re-union," but what they called a "reg'lar breakdown." They were "going it," in a cotton room, most joyfully, to the melodious strains of a three-stringed fiddle, and a fig-box banjo. Their happiness seemed complete. Such dancing, and capering, and grinning, and gesticulating, and singing, and shouting, and showing of ivory, and eyeballs, threw entirely in the shade any thing I had before seen or heard, in the shape of negro minstrelsy. It was a regular outbursting and overflowing of the good feelings of our nature, unalloyed by trouble or thought of any kind. Beside this, the air was savory of delicious viands,—of turkey, of pig, of ham, of chicken. The sissing and spitting that we heard in the adjoining "quarters," assured us that many a hen-roost, and turkey tree, and pig-pen, had suffered that night; and we could smell onions and potatoes a-boil-

ing, and batter cakes a-baking, suggestive of "active transactions" in the provision market. The proprietor was rather disposed to "come down" on them, at first, but I suppose, on account of our presence, he concluded to let them have their "spree" out, as he styled it, and "bring them up standing" in the morning. He thought, also, that it would be a good opportunity to learn whether there was any insurrectionary or emigrating spirit among the blacks of the neighborhood, for the planters had been quite uneasy on this point lately, on account of several negroes having run off. We did not care to disturb the negroes in their enjoyment, and so we laid down (after partaking of some cold corn bread and boiled pork), to get a little rest for our next day's labors. Scarcely had we laid down when our host came in with a hurried step, and an anxiety of countenance, expressive of having discovered something of importance.

"'I 've heard of your women,' he exclaimed; 'I know where they are.'"

If ever three individuals jumped up in the shortest possible time, that operation took place about this time, seventy miles east of ——.

"Where are they! where are they!" We hardly gave him time to tell us.

"'I overheard two boys talking about them,' he continued; 'one of the boys belongs to a large landholder, about seven miles from here; this fellow has the confidence of his master, and lives off in the woods with his wench, alone, some two miles from his master's house; his business is to take care of a large number of hogs that live on the mast about him. Sam, another black, whose business is the same, lives half a mile from him. He was telling this other boy, that he and Sam had just

got hold of a fat job. (I 'll tell you just how they talked):

"An' what d'ye think 't is, Gum? ye can't tell nohow. Ha! ha! ha! Won't ye tell nobody, if I 'll tell ye, Gum, hey?" (He 'd been takin' right smart of white-eye, I reckon).

"No, Phil, I won't tell nobody, sure!"

"Wal, ye see, Gum, I 's gwine to hunt up the one-eared breedin' sow (she hadn't cum up fur two days), an' I met an awful nice carriage on the road,—fancy hosses too,—all 'fixed up' to smash,—rale city riggins; it was all shet up, you couldn't see nothin' inside. The man a-drivin' stopped me and asked me all about whar I lived, and what I worked at, an' who lived by me, till I didn't know what next he 's gwine to ask. Bym-by, he said, gettin' off from the carriage and takin' me off to one side (he talked close to my ear, almost whisp'rin'):

"'D' ye want to make some money, you and your other man, Sam,—and make it right easy?'"

"Wal, yes, ses I;—can't I make it all without Sam?—I 'm a buster at work. Me an' Sal 's a team,—you can bet on that. Sal can shoulder a two hundred hog,—an' I can shoulder the hog and Sal too."

"'No, it aint any hard work. I want you and Sal to keep a real handsum woman for us, and Sam to keep another.'"

"You ken bet, Gum, I opened my peepers, sum. 'Keep a couple o' handsum wimen!'"

"'Don't stand thar gapin', like a d—d fool,' the feller sed, shakin' me by the shoulder. 'Will you do it or not?'"

"Why,—yes,—I s'pose so," I sed; I darn't refuse, for I 's afear'd the feller 'd kill me, he looked so orful cross."

"'There's three men of us,'" he sed. 'Now if you and

Sam do jest as we tell ye we'll git you the nicest things to live on, an'll give ye enough to dress finer 'n any nigger this side of ——; but mind ye, if ye tell a livin' soul anythin' about our bein' with ye, I'll cut yer d—d throat from ear to ear.' An' he was a-gwine to show me how he'd do it, with the sharpest lookin' butcher knife you ever seed; but I told him he needn't, as how we'd do jest as they said. He took me then to the carriage, and showed me the t'other men, and the wimen. One of the men was an almighty handsum feller. And the wimen.—Oh! you git out! Gum, 'twould make yer mouth water to look at 'em. I tell ye, they looked jest like what old dad Fairbanks calls 'angels,' when he's exortin'. But one of em's the handsumest; she's nothin' but a gal yet, nuther; she set along-side the handsum feller. T'other one's older, but she's a reg'lar woman, I tell ye. She's thin, though, an' looks as if she'd jest got over the yaller fever. You've seen old massa's Kate, haven't ye,—hey? Wal, she can't hold a candle to that young gal. I thought Kate couldn't be beat; but she's nowhar.

"But what d'ye think, Gum! that handsum feller wants to marry that angel (for I can't call 'er anythin' else) an' she don't want 'im, an' she's cryin' herself almost to death. The handsum feller's a-stayin' with me, and t'other woman, and the two men's a-stayin' with Sam. I expect they're a-goin' to do somethin' desp'rit t'night, fur they was almighty anxious to git me and Sal, and Sam, and his Peg off to the flare-up, as soon's we got word of it.

"Now I tell ye, Gum, don't ye never tell nobody, an' when we're through with this job (I reckon how they won't stay very long) I'm a-gwine to get up a rousin' big frolic, I tell ye. I'll beat this all to smash. Now

if ye don't tell nobody, I'll give ye half the bossin' to do.

"Oh! ye needn't be afear'd," the other boy said, "if anybody gits anythin' out o' Gum, they'll have to do it when he's a-snorin.'"

This was the longest story I ever listened to; but it was impossible to get Jennings (our host's name) to abridge it one word. He could not come to the point, without telling the whole conversation. I was glad then when he was through, and I could urge immediate action. He wanted to stay and "see the frolic out," but we could not consent to this. Partly by persuasion, and partly by the glitter of a double eagle, he consented to go with us at once.

We started off on a brisk trot, which I urged on to a gallop, going through fields and lanes, along ravines and over hills,—now through an open wood, and now single file along a narrow path, hemmed in on either side by impenetrable underbrush and briars. Our hats, and clothes, and faces gave, in legible lines and rents, a graphic account of the journey; but we made good time. Our guide was perfectly at home, in this labyrinth of cross-roads and tracks, leading to every point of the compass. I don't think we had rode more than an hour, when our leader turned his head and said:

"D'ye see that opening yonder? That's where Phil lives; and half a mile further is Sam's cabin. Let's hitch our horses here in the woods, and creep up to the house, so as not to disturb the dogs."

Standing under the window (if a square hole in the logs, closed with a rough board door, hung on a pair of old brogan soles, can be called a window) we heard two voices inside. I recognized them, at once, as Henriette's and Landor's.

"Oh! spare me, I beg of you, spare me! Spare me for my widowed father's sake."

"We 've talked long enough," said Landor, in a brutal voice, "so come along; I'll not wait any longer."

A scream which pierced the rude walls of the cabin startled us. We sprang with one movement to the door; it leaped from our hands and we stood before the paralyzed libertine. He stood by the side of a rude bed, on which Henriette lay unconscious as when she shall lie in her winding-sheet. One of the officers clapped Landor on the shoulder, saying:

"I arrest you in the name of the commonwealth."

In spite of his entreaties, and even tears, they put shackles on his feet and hands. I understood but little about the healing art, but I had heard that fresh air was always good under such circumstances, so I carried Henriette to the door while Jennings fanned her with his broad panama.

Sudden gaspings and twitchings of the face and limbs, gave us hope that she was reviving. Oh! what moments of agonizing suspense were those. I never before knew how dear that life was to me, which I was now trying to prevent leaving its fair tenement! While gazing on those heavenly features, I inwardly, and with all my soul, wrestled with God for his assistance. It was granted! She opened her eyes! she beheld me.

Oh! what rapture! This was heaven! No greater thrill of joy could stir my soul!

Thank God,—thou blessed God, I thank thee! she is saved! These involuntary exclamations brought her completely to consciousness.

"Robert! Robert! Oh! how is this! Is this so, or do I dream?" she asked, looking around with uncertainty on the strange faces.

"Thank God, it is all reality," I exclaimed. "God has sent us to save you!"

And then she gave way to sobs, and laughings, and shoutings, until I really feared she would go deranged with excess of joy. I got her calmed down somewhat, by telling her the danger of her too great joy.

"Oh! I can not help it, dear Robert!" and she fell weeping on my neck (excuse my faithful account of this scene as it happened, although it involves an affectionate interest, unworthy your humble friend).

"But where is father!" she asked, as she jumped to her feet. She hardly seemed satisfied that he could not be here to enjoy this happiest of meetings. We told her.

"Come, let 's find Matilda, and get to father as soon as we can. Oh! how thankful that I am delivered from this horrid place," and she shuddered as she looked around the room and saw her persecutor chained hand and foot.

"We soon surrounded Sam's cabin, and found a couple of birds there very interesting to us as villainologists,—no other than the Rev. Mr. Falleau and De Long, with their prisoner, Matilda, fastened to her bed by means of a strong strap sewed around her neck and to the bed-post.

To say that she was frantically overjoyed at her unexpected deliverance, would be a faint expression of the extatic emotions she felt. Equally hard and humiliating was it for the accomplices, in this foul conspiracy, to wear the iron shackles. But we wished to make sure, this time, of protecting their intended victims from future molestation. No doubt, the three prisoners felt real sorrow at their unenviable situation. As much as Henriette had been injured by them, her young, forgiving heart would have freed them at once. Matilda might

have forgiven them, but she did not wish her loved Henriette to live in constant dread of being sacrificed at their hands.

We immediately made preparations to leave. Putting the ladies on our horses, and making the prisoners walk before us in single file, we reached Jennings' about sunrise. I forgot to mention that Phil and his Sal, as likewise Sam and his ebony "half," got home just before we started. Their approach was announced by loud whoopings, as if we were about being pounced upon and scalped by some ferocious band of Sioux. As they came nearer, the "opening" their voices became less resonant and more distinct; we could hear Phil going on at a rapid rate,—apparently in a high state of exhilaration,—laying off the programme of his imaginary frolic.

"Now, I tell ye, Sam, won't I have a buster, eh?—This thing of Jennin's' boys to night won't hold a candle to it. An' can't we holler as loud as we please here, without anybody a-hearin' of us? There 's no fun 't all whar a feller 's got to talk low, for fear the white folks 'll hear 'im. An' you can bet I 'll have anuff 'white-eye;' Phil won't bring it home in a jug. It won't run out as it did t' night, 'fore half thah niggers av wet their whistles. It 's un aggrawation, Sam, for a feller t'ah git no morn 'n we 've got t' night. But what in the devil 's this, Sam!" he said in a voice very much subdued, both as to volume and firmness; "I say, Sam, what d' ye s'pose this means! We 're cotched, I 'll bet. May-be how 's these fellers 'av got company, Sam. Let 's go up kind ov slow and see what 's up."

And they did come up "kind ov slow," performing all sorts of gyrations, with their superior extremities, as if they would rather "kind ov" fly than walk there.

Madames Phil and Sam remaining at a safe distance, listening with both ears and one hand for "what was up." Just as a pair of dark globular bodies showed themselves round the corner of the cabin, two of us pounced upon them, and the two policemen came on them from the rear. Jennings was the originator of this plot, as he considered a little fright absolutely necessary as a moral lesson, to prevent the darkies tampering with strange white men. If there is any virtue in fright, I 'll be bound they never will be caught in such a scrape again; for a pair of worse scared negroes, I think, never was seen before. I could feel the cold sweet starting from their hands, and their eyes and mouths stood open, as if they were testing the extreme extension of those necessary organs. They were perfectly mute,—for their fright was too excessive for vocal expression. If the last trump had sounded in their ears they could not have been more completely terrified.

Jennings told them these officers were going to take them to jail for harboring white folks;—this restored their powers of speech;—if they did not beg in good earnest,—to be spared this punishment,—I am not acquainted with the powers of supplication.

"Oh! we 'll never do it again, Massa Jennin's, if you 'll let us off an' don't tell Massa Jones;" and the tears ran down their cheeks (which would have been blanched, if it were possible).

The farce that we were playing with the poor fellows rendered the scene ludicrous in the extreme. I should not have been running any great risk in going bail that these two sadly disappointed gentlemen (one of whom, Phil, should have been master of ceremonies for some Emperor Soloque), would never again have courage to

look a strange white man in the face, for fear he had "handsum wimen" to take care of.

After Jennings had administered what he considered enough of moral preventative, he consented to let them off, and not to tell Massa Jones. If their mental suffering had been extreme, their joy was now equally exuberant. They were well satisfied to give up their vivid anticipations of roast pigs, and turkeys, and kegs of "white-eye," which were to stimulate the inner nigger to a perfect enjoyment of mundane bliss at their expected "frolic."

"Massa Jennin's" was covered with "thankees," "bless-ye's" and "God bless-ye's, Massa Jennin's," until he most certainly would have suffocated, if these shady benedictions had been a material substance.

It was quite amusing to see with what perfect astonishment the blacks received their master's premature return. If "old man Jennin's" had risen from the dead, it would not have more astonished them.

After partaking of a hearty breakfast at "Massa Jennin's'," while he was out lecturing the blacks on the immoral tendency of "breakdowns" in general,—evidently using some very affecting oratory (judging from the outbursts of *feeling*, I heard occasionally), we all started *en route* for the magistrate's office. A black fellow drove the prisoners in a large four-horse wagon, whose box would have made an effectual jail: for no prisoner could have broken through or scaled its walls.

It was about ten miles to the County Seat, and a very primitive road it was,—a capital road for a dyspeptic to ride over. If there be any virtue in jolting, a few rides would cure him effectually, unless it would prove an over-dose of the medicine.

At the examination of the prisoners, Matilda gave the following testimony:

"That four days ago, about seven o'clock in the evening, she and Henriette Brandon went ashore from the steamer, —— at ——, to call on the coroner. Returning to the boat we were seized by Landor and De Long, and borne into a carriage, Mr. Falleau acting as driver. A handkerchief was held tightly over our mouths, and we were driven rapidly off. We traveled all that night. In the morning we stopped, while Landor went to a house at some distance from the road, and came back with a pail of provisions and a bag of grain. Soon after the carriage was driven off from the road, and all got out in the midst of a thick wood. Having waited here about an hour, to eat, and feed the horses, we were forced in the carriage again. Our mouths were tightly bandaged, and our hands tied behind us. Mr. Falleau now sat in the carriage, and De Long drove. We became very thirsty, not being permitted to drink any thing but some wine, of which the prisoners took frequent and large draughts. From its effects they became very brutal in their manner. The carriage stopped frequently, when we could hear De Long get off and hitch the horses, and walk away, returning in a few minutes. Sometimes he would stop to talk with persons on the road, always hitching his horses, and taking those he talked with off, beyond hearing distance. We finally were taken out at a negro cabin, in the woods, in which lived a black man named Phil, and a woman he called Sal. Henriette was kept here, in spite of her entreaties and threats to destroy herself. Landor remained with her. De Long and Mr. Falleau took me to another cabin, about half a mile distant. I was kept tied to a bed, as the gentlemen here, found me."

Henriette begged that she might be excused from testifying, which was granted,—the Court thinking there was abundant testimony without hers. We employed an able attorney, this time; not through any spirit of revenge, but to secure Henriette from further molestation. The prisoners employed the balance of the County Seat lawyers,—the principal one of which was a Mr. Shavefield, Esq. He was said to be a very fair specimen of a Mississippi lawyer.

In order to give a correct idea of this specimen of *jurisconsultus Mississippialis*, it will be necessary to divide him into two parts (which his lineal dimensions would well admit of),—his physical part and his intangible part,—I will not say mental, for this would express a larger idea than I would wish to convey.

As to the third part, which is usually ascribed to humanity, *to wit*, the moral part, I will make no account of in this instance, as, if there were a vestige of it, it would have been invisible to the naked eye.

As above hinted, length was his prominent, physical feature. It would seem that when dame Nature originated young Shavefield, Esq., she had been out at a "taffy pulling," and had made the little *shaver* from a "gob" of boiled molasses,—drawing it out to the extreme point of its ductility. His pale-yellow complexion, very much resembling the color of drawn taffy, rendered this supposition as to his germination still more plausible. He had a long, hollow cheek, not unlike the mold-board of a "Peacock" plow,—a protuberant chin, making one feel like "getting off from the track," at its approach, as at the approach of a "cow-catcher."

He had a dull, sleepy eye, that, I believe, was in-

tended to be blue or gray, over which the lids moved as if there was no need of being in a hurry. We were half inclined to think that their motions were retarded by something more than natural apathy,—a warm, enervating climate might have had something to do with it;—we have seen, however, artificial stimuli, such as brandy-smashes, Tom-and-Jerries, and the like, produce this same drooping of the eyelids, especially if taken late at night,—combined with a game at "poker." I wish it to be distinctly understood, that I do not throw out even an intimation that a legal dignitary of the caliber of Mr. Shavefield, Esq. (he having filled county offices, through the suffrage of bat-eyed Democracy, till he had come to the belief that he was, in truth, the Lord's anointed,—the hereditary and legitimate heir to all auditorships, States' attorneyships, and suck-at-the-county treasuryships, through all succeeding generations of "Dimicrats"), I say, that it is not to be supposed for a moment, that red tape of this width would require any artificial aid, to enable it to hold any possible combination of circumstances tightly together. This proclivity of the eyelids downward, was "a way" of Shavefield's (it would be well to put in a parenthesis here, containing the old saw, that "all great men have their ways").

Mr. Shavefield, viewed directly in the face, presented a somewhat concave, not to say blank appearance. I have seen masculine women from the country, before now, a little jaundiced, with precisely such faces. As to the oral opening of the aforesaid facial concavity, it was in perfect correspondence with the attorney's lineal dimensions.

It is evident, that so far as capacity is concerned,

nature made ample provision in the construction of this particular mouth, for the debouche of the largest class ideas.

The first impression one would have, on viewing this capacious opening, would be, that it had, to a certain extent at least, been diverted from its original intention of giving exit solely to voluminous intellectualities. For a well marked flabbiness of the lips, a partial loss of power,—frequently brought on by the use of narcotic and stimulating sialagogues,—a hanging down at the corners of the mouth, from which corners oozed a dark liquid, requiring to be wiped off frequently by the attorney's coat sleeve, and more than all, a squirting of this same dark fluid at regular intervals, say once in about a minute and a half, forced the impression on our minds that this forensic mouth-piece was sometimes used for other than argumentative purposes,

So much for the external *physique* of Mr. Shavefield, Esq. His head being covered with a plush cap, and his body and extremities with a roomy suit of threadbare black, rendered further description uncertain. As to the "manners and habits" of the *jurisconsultus Mississippialis*, I can only give you the results of my observations in the trial under consideration. He came in Court with a lazy, dragging gait, head and shoulders down, plush cap on, a book under the left arm, and right hand in the pocket. His eyes appeared to have an unusual expression, from being bloodshot, as though he had "burned the midnight oil," the night before, in some *intellectual* operation or other. He did not condescend to look at, much less to speak to, any one, until he brought himself up standing before the judge.

He opened his case precisely as Mr. McLaughlin, Esq. did his; to wit, by cramming half a paper of "fine cut"

in his mouth. It would seem that tobacco and law have some relationship, by these cases all being opened with "fine cut." And we must admit, from our little experience in "lawing," that it is in fact just about as cleanly and profitable business as "chewing." After the "opening," all other resemblance (either physically or mentally speaking) between these two legal characters ended. Mr. McLaughlin, Esq. was rather short, while Mr. Shavefield, Esq. was rather long; Mr. McLaughlin was flashy and quite Shaksperian, when he got started; while Mr. Shavefield was always sleepy. The former depended on wonderful and unheard of precedents,—an avalanche of legal knowledge, and a terrific hailstorm of unintelligible jaw breakers;—the latter threw his case entirely on his own experience,—no case could possibly occur but had its duplicate in Shavefield, Esq.'s forensic experience. He had defended "some dozens of just such cases as ours," and knew all about them, without consulting the books. In fact, referring to a book would have a tarnishing effect on the prestige of his legal omniscience. His faithful troop of "constituents" and clients, who are down on "book larnin'," would lose their faith in him if he were to intimate that a book, by any possibility, could furnish him with a new idea.

Mr. Shavefield, Esq. was looked up to and relied on, by his unilluminated flock, in the same manner and with the same faith, that an "old doctor" would be by the aforesaid woolly innocents. They thought Mr. Shavefield,—law personified. It never entered their mutton-heads that there was any other lawyer or that any other man could, by any possibility, oversee the gigantic and astonishing machinery of their county crib. They never even took courage to ask whether there was

any other knowing man beside the wonderful Mr. Shavefield, Esq., he being their idea or embodiment of human intellectuality,—the "old doctor," to be employed in all cases of "janders," and "spotted fevers," and "black tongues,"—the man to write their "last wills and testaments," and the man to administer on their estates;—the man to tell them what their bill was without wasting paper and ink on "itims." If Mr. Shavefield could not save a case there was no use of any other doctor trying it; it must die from what coroners call a "dispensation of providence."

So in our case, the wonderful "embodiment" gave the judge his opinion,—told what he had done and said before, in similar cases, and how it always came out to substantiate his opinion; having done this, and having deposited his regular number of huge tobacco quids on the floor, and scattered them with the toes of his boots, in the manner that a good farmer scatters "droppings" over his meadow in the spring (the attorney had an original fashion of walking backward and forward, while he was conducting a case, for all the world, like Van Amburgh's white bear in a hot day; this exercise of the lower extremities, no doubt, driving the ideas scattered over his extensive terminations, upward toward the cranium,—in the same nanner that buffaloes are collected by a concentrating hue and cry through the adjacent country), I say, having gone through with his standing programme for all legal occasions, he left the patient to the "May it please the court," and divine Providence.

Having done all that human agency could do, and being fully conscious of it, he dons old plush again,—puts his book of red-taped paper under his left arm,—sends his right hand and arm on an exploring expedition

down the supersartorial channel of his breeches' right leg, stoops his head and shoulders to the right direction and stalks out. Not even the coveted assistance of Mr. Shavefield, Esq., together with his own valuable private opinions could save his clients. It was beyond doubt a "dispensation of Providence," admitting of no human alleviation. The prisoners were committed to jail to await their final trial at the spring Court, to which our company was recognized to appear.

When the judge proclaimed that the prisoners should be "bound over to Court," and ordered the sheriff to take them to jail, the preacher burst into tears. Landor was dejected,—his spirit perfectly subdued; he said nothing, moving mechanically as he was ordered. When about ready to leave, the jailer came to us at the tavern and said the prisoners wished to see me. I went to the jail and found them heavily loaded with irons,—a precaution necessary on account of the rickety condition of the jail,—which was a hewn log-house apparently over half a century old, and about ready to fall down. We considered the prisoners had as much to fear from their present tenement as from the rigors of the law. Several holes were shown us where prisoners had cut and burnt their way out. Notwithstanding all the injuries these men had done us, I could not help pitying them in their present condition. I was almost sorry we had appeared against them. They begged most piteously, and especially Landor, for our mercy, promising most faithfully never to molest us again, and to make all the restitution in their power for the trouble they had caused us. I inquired of an official if we could liberate the prisoners.

"No, sir, you 've nothing to do with them now; they are in the hands of the State, and so are you, as wit-

nesses against them. They must remain here till they are tried or till they get bail."

They wished me to write a letter for them, before I left. To this I cheerfully assented: I first penned a letter for Landor to his wife, and then one for the preacher to Miss Callan, whom he had left in a small town in Ohio. Landor's letter expressed deep contrition,—begging his wife's forgiveness, and beseeching her to exert her influence in getting her father to obtain him bail.

Falleau's letter was full of sorrow and humiliation. He did not wish to write to his wife and friends in Cincinnati. He did not seek liberation from his confinement. He felt that he had sinned,—greatly sinned,—and that he deserved the severest punishment. This letter to Miss Callan was truly touching, expressing his grief at the deep injustice he had done her: he could not hope for her forgiveness; he felt that he should be punished, and eternally, for it. He besought her to repent; to fall at the feet of her Saviour, who showed mercy to worse than she. "Oh! that I could bear the infamy and punishment that you will be subjected to." And the preacher wept while I was penning these lines.

"Oh!" said he, "that I never had been tempted to tamper with this wicked thing. It has been my ruin. It will be my eternal damnation."

I could not help but feel for his extreme suffering, and resolved to do all I could to mitigate his punishment.

For Landor I had not so much sympathy; although he appeared very penitent, it was probably because he was in difficulty; if at liberty he would, no doubt, be guilty of the very same acts of villainy again.

De Long had nothing to say,—no requests to make.

He sat sulkily resigned to his fate, seeming to despise the weak-heartedness of his companions.

The next day after the trial we returned to ——. We found the father almost deranged with trouble;—and the sudden joy produced by our return threatened to affect his mind still more.

We were soon on our way home again, with thankful hearts, that we had been delivered from the plots of our enemies. We arrived in due time at the residence of Mr. Brandon.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Arrive Home. A Model Plantation. Life in Louisiana. Other Letters received, a month having elapsed. Joyful tidings. A most happy arrangement "all round." "The Happiest of Men." A perfect enjoyment of earthly bliss. Joyous Conclusion.

IT would be impossible to describe the joy of the blacks at the arrival of "Massa Brandon," and more particularly of "Missus Hettie." It seemed as if they would eat her up for joy; and she was no less affected by the simple expressions of their overflowing love. Her eyes moistened as she shook the domestics heartily by the hand. And when she came to an old woman, whose head was white as silver, she burst into tears:

"How do you do, aunt Betty?"

"Bless the Lord for bringin' back my 'Hettie,'" and the old woman cried like a child.

Mr. Brandon has a splendid plantation, containing about fifteen hundred acres, in the highest state of cultivation. It is unusual to see land in a slave State so well improved. Every thing is in perfect order. The

farming utensils (and he has the most improved of every kind) are all kept in their places, under cover, till they are needed. The teams of mules and cattle, and the other domestic animals, show that they are well cared for. The blacks (and there seems to be a superabundance of them, Mr. Brandon never having parted with one since he received the original stock from his father) are well housed, in clean little cottages; well clothed, and their full round faces are eloquent of overflowing larders. Mr. Brandon has paid a good deal of attention to horticulture; he has the finest orchards, and the greatest variety of choice shrubbery of any planter in the country. His outbuildings are all well built and painted. The dwelling-house is a regular American palace, of brick, with brown stone front, two lofty stories high, having a row of tall columns extending around three sides. The finishing and furnishing inside is most splendid, and is kept in the nicest order, under the direction of Susan, a favorite domestic, who was educated to this post by Mr. Brandon's deceased mother.

The house is furnished with cellars, bath-houses, and every convenience that modern improvement has invented. There is a nice little room on the second floor, opening on a splendid balcony at the north side, in which is kept a very choice library; on the center-table are new numbers of the best magazines and newspapers in the country,—among which I noticed several agricultural periodicals; they have their leaves cut, and look as though they had been read,—accounting for the system and science that appears in Mr. Brandon's farming operations. It is evident that Henriette is the reigning divinity of the place. All do homage, not coercive, but willing, joyous homage to her. To say that she is loved by all, would convey no idea of the adoration

with which this domestic community look up to her. If all slave establishments were conducted as humanely as this, slavery would be robbed of much of its bitterness.

But I must bring my narrative to a close. Mr. Brandon, Matilda and Henriette, all send their love; they will write to you in a day or two. Believe me, dear sir, I remain your sincerest of friends.

ROBERT DAVISON."

In a day or two I received three more letters, with the same postmark as the above. The first I opened, read as follows:

"MY DEAR FRIEND:—

I feel that the Lord has been good to me. I did complain and thought my afflictions were worse than I deserved; but I believe it was all for the best. It has caused me to throw myself on the mercy of my Saviour. He has listened to my prayers, and raised me from my degradation. These troubles have taught me in what consists the true pleasure of life, and that earthly pleasure is at least but short-lived and mixed with bitterness. They have taught me that our life here is but a preparation for a better and eternal life. I almost thank God for these afflictions, for they have opened to me the way of enduring happiness.

My situation here, is every thing that I could wish for. I had despaired of ever finding another such a home, as I so recklessly abandoned; but I have found it; I feel it is far better than I deserve. And what is of more pleasure to me, I can make myself useful here. My daily prayer is, that the rest of my life may be of

use to others, and a drawing nearer to that better and eternal life.

Henriette is as joyous as a bird in spring. I sometimes ask myself, if heaven can contain more of bliss for her? I sometimes think there is a new and essential element in her happiness, in the person of Robert. She most certainly has more than an ordinary regard for him, and I assure you, it is well bestowed; for a more noble heart never beat in the human breast.

He grows more and more in Mr. Brandon's favor, who puts as much reliance in Robert's judgment as he does in his own. The blacks also think there never was such a man as "Massa Davison." I have no doubt, that Mr. Brandon will, eventually, give Robert the entire management of his business.

Robert and Mr. B. seem to be enjoying themselves perfectly in making arrangements for their farming operations, for they both have a taste for this business, and study it as they would an elaborate science; as indeed it is, and the most noble, profitable, and elevating of sciences.

My dear sir, I never can fully express my thankfulness for the great obligations under which you have placed me. God only can sufficiently reward you; and my prayer is, that your life may be a life of happiness, and that you may live with the blessed through immortality.

Please write often to us, as nothing affords us more pleasure than to hear from you.

Yours, truly,

MATILDA DE LONG."

The next letter read:

"MY VERY DEAR FRIEND:—

How happy I am. I can ask for nothing more. A happy home; a dear father; Matilda (as near a mother as any other woman can be); and a —— brother;—yes, Robert is as kind as a brother could be. We are happy, all of us. I wish you could live with us too. I am too glad to write much, for I can not begin to tell you how very happy I am.

Yours, most gratefully,

HENRIETTE BRANDON."

The last letter I opened, whose superscription was in a much stronger hand than the other two, read thus:

"DEAR SIR:—

Inclosed, find certificate of deposit for $500.

Please accept, as a small testimonial of my regard.

Yours, etc.

J. BRANDON."

This last letter was truly of the "substantial" kind, and the proper amount of modesty prevents me telling how I disposed of it.

I answered these letters immediately, which was a great pleasure. In about four weeks afterward, I received another large letter from ——. I recognized it at once as being from Davison. Here it is:

"DEAREST FRIEND:—

I wish you as much joy in reading this letter, as I have in writing it. I will break the matter at once to you, by sending an extract from one of our newspapers:

'MARRIED,

On the 21st inst., at his residence, Mr. James Brandon, to Miss Matilda De Long.

Also, on the same day, and at the same place, Mr. Robert Davison, to Miss Henriette Brandon, daughter of Mr. James Brandon.'

I should have broken the news to you by degrees, if I had not considered you a very brave man, and capable of withstanding the shock at once. I don't know as I can say any words that will mitigate the latter part of the catastrophe;—it is done! I am the husband of Henriette!

I almost imagine, sometimes, that I am in a vision,—that this is all a delightful dream. It hardly seems possible that so unworthy a person as your humble correspondent, should be possessed of such a treasure,—that I should call such a superior being as Henriette, 'wife.' I don't know what I have done to win such a prize. Surely, I have done nothing for her but what any man should have done, without expectation of reward. I have done nothing more than my duty. When I first accepted the task of being her protector, I had no expectation of being any thing more; but as I became more and more acquainted, I came more and more,—I will not say,—to love her,—for it seemed presumption in me to harbor such a feeling, for one so far above me in her approach to perfection. I adored her,—she was my divinity,—I did not expect or hope that she would have for me any other feelings than those of ordinary friendship. And yet, at times, I could not help noticing an expression in her soul-speaking eye, and glowing face, of more than ordinary regard. It seemed to me that she was a being, too good,—too ethereal,—too near the angel in her organization, to be

the wife of any man, much less, of so unworthy a man as myself. That she really, and truly loved me, I learned in this wise:

I was talking with Matilda one evening, alone, when with some little hesitation she ——, I was a-going to say, opened the gates of Paradise to me; but this would be sacrilegious ——. I will say, that she spread out to my enraptured vision as near a heaven as could be for me this side the grave.

Give me a woman's eye to look into the heart. It is a leopard's eye. It can distinguish things in that dark cavity that wholly escape our duller sight.

"Do you know, Robert, that Henriette loves you?"

"Love's me! Impossible! No, I did not imagine such a thing. You are surely joking, Matilda." And I tried to pass off my startled anxiety as best I could.

"Robert, I am not joking. I am in good earnest. I thought, from your manner toward her, that you could not be aware that she loves you,—really and truly loves you. I know she does by her looks every time your name is mentioned. And what settles the matter beyond all doubt, she talks of you in her sleep. I told her of this yesterday, and she confessed, not only with her stammering tongue, but with her crimson cheek, that she loved you most passionately."

I pressed Matilda's hand, and she told me afterward, that I cried for joy. I know I must have acted very ridiculous, for I never felt so happy before. She asked me if I did not reciprocate Henriette's affection? I told her of my unworthiness; that I had not dared to think of such a thing.

"This is wrong in you, Robert, though not intentional. If you regard Henriette's feelings, you will love her, and openly avow it, for nothing would give her so

much joy. She has often asked me, since I found out the secret of her heart,—'Do you think it possible for him to love me? Oh, if he would, I should be perfectly happy.'"

"Did she say so, Matilda, in good faith?"

"Yes."

"This is too good to believe. I am blessed, supremely blessed! Are you sure, Matilda,—for I know you would not advise me wrongly,—that it would be right for me to avow my deep feelings for Henriette; for if there be a stronger feeling of affection than love, I have that feeling for her."

"Right! If you can truly love Henriette, it is not only right, but your duty to do so, for I am satisfied she can not be happy without your love."

I soon became satisfied, in my intercourse with Henriette, that Matilda was right,—and I dared to love. Oh! what a bright elysium was now open to me. Her presence was heaven to me,—her absence the dreariest solitude. Marriage had not been spoken of, nor even thought of by me. I loved her dearly,—passionately loved her with all my soul. It was a holy, spiritual love,—a union of souls too intense and pure for sensual alloy.

When we got fairly settled here, and came to living an ordinary practical life, the natural relations of man and wife suggested themselves. I did not press my suit. The thing seemed to come to pass spontaneously, somehow or other, until, by a sort of legerdemain, I found myself engaged to be married to Henriette Brandon; yes, to Henriette Brandon. An engagement which, if you had hinted the possibility of, the first time I saw her, I should have said, impossible,—such a thing can never happen!

Of Mr. Brandon's courtship I know nothing; but the propriety of their present relationship suggested itself more and more as they became acquainted with one another. The growth of their affection was natural and mature, and I believe that their union will be a happy one; greatly conducive to the happiness of both.

When Matilda asked Henriette how such an arrangement would suit her, she was overjoyed at the announcement. Nothing could have pleased her more. Mr. Brandon called me in the library, one day, and after some nervous movements at arranging the chairs, which were already perfectly arranged, and picking up a pen and dipping it into the inkstand, as if to write, giving his cravat a pull with the forefinger of his left hand, as if the tie were producing suffocation, when in fact he could almost have jumped through it, said, in a very stammering way, very unusual to him, casting his eyes nervously and without any fixed purpose over a half-written sheet before him,—which was bottom side up,—"Mr. Davison, we–we–we have got some bui-do–fa–fami–domestic business to be arranged, and (getting the master of his voice) we might as well attend to it first as last."

"Robert, I am engaged to be married to Matilda De Long; the thing is settled. Now, I know that you and Henriette love one another, and I don't see any objection to your doing so; why not have all the ceremonies done up at once? You might as well get married now as at any other time,—and then it will be over; and, perhaps, we can attend to business better."

I did not say any thing, and so I suppose that he considered, as the old saw has it, that "silence gives consent."

The next thing of importance I heard of was, that

the nuptial arrangements were all made, and that Henriette Brandon, on the 21st, was to become Mrs. Henriette Davison; I can hardly believe the reality of it yet, although I have continual evidence of the fact.

We had a very plain wedding, so far as display and invitations were concerned, but a sumptuous and joyous one for the domestics. The ceremony took place in the double parlor, which, when the folding-doors are opened, is capable of containing over a hundred persons. This was filled: a narrow line of white, consisting of invited relations and friends, and a dark back-ground of sable faces, whose white teeth and eyeballs fairly glittered with joy. We had a splendid dinner and supper. It did one's heart good to see how the perfectly happy domestics enjoyed it. They can enjoy a feast with much more satisfaction than their more highly-favored masters. No trouble, or misgiving, or gloomy thought throws its bitterness in their cup of joy. To them the enjoyment of the senses has a relish denied to more cultivated tastes. As their expression has it, they "throw themselves away when a frolic is on hand." Though this exquisite enjoyment of the palate was the prerogative of the happy blacks,—yet there was a more heavenly enjoyment,—a pure ethereal ecstasy that exhilarated my soul that day, which can not be imagined by sensual natures.

Henriette and I were one!—bone of one bone and flesh of one flesh,—ay, and spirit of one spirit. And, I believe, she was happy. Oh! how that added to my supreme enjoyment! To know that the being who made me blessed, was also blessed in return! It seemed that my measure of bliss was full. Never,—no never can there be a happier day! And Matilda too, and Mr. Brandon, were happy. Though their maturer natures were less fervent and glowing than ours, yet it was

plain to be seen that this new relationship of husband and wife was pregnant with joy to them.

I have now been married a week, and my happiness is none the less. Oh, may it ever continue so! If possible, I love Henriette more and more every day; but you say our honeymoon is not over yet. I hope that it never will be. I hardly can imagine any circumstances that could lessen my love for her; adversity, sickness, or even deformity, would add to it. I believe the longer I live and learn of her angelic nature, the dearer she will become to me. I am glad that my religion teaches me there is an eternal life beyond the grave, where souls will meet to part no more: I know there must be. My soul tells me that an all-wise and beneficent Creator would never ordain that two spirits, so vitally and indissolubly connected as ours, should remain long torn asunder. No; when we have lived this life out together, I feel that there must be another and an eternal life, where we can live in each other's being forever.

But I am intruding on your patience by thus reciting my private feelings. How natural it is for us to suppose others take the same interest in our feelings as we do ourselves; but I do feel so happy that I could not help pouring out my joy to one who, I know, will hear of it with pleasure. And how, dear sir, can I be sufficiently grateful to you who was the instrument of my being thus supremely blest! Oh! that I could perform some office for you worthy the deep sense of gratitude I am under. One promise I shall exact of you: if ever circumstances occur that you shall need assistance in any manner, that you promise to give me the boon of rendering that assistance. But I am becoming tedious, I must bid you good-by; Mr. Brandon, and Matilda

and Henriette, all send their love to you. They insist on your paying us a visit soon; and I like to have forgotten it,—they sent you yesterday, by express, a box of the wedding cake. It is beautiful and pleasant to the taste, but faintly emblematic of the superlative happiness, with which it is associated.

From your dear friend,

ROBERT DAVISON."

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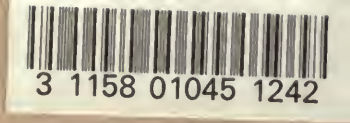
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